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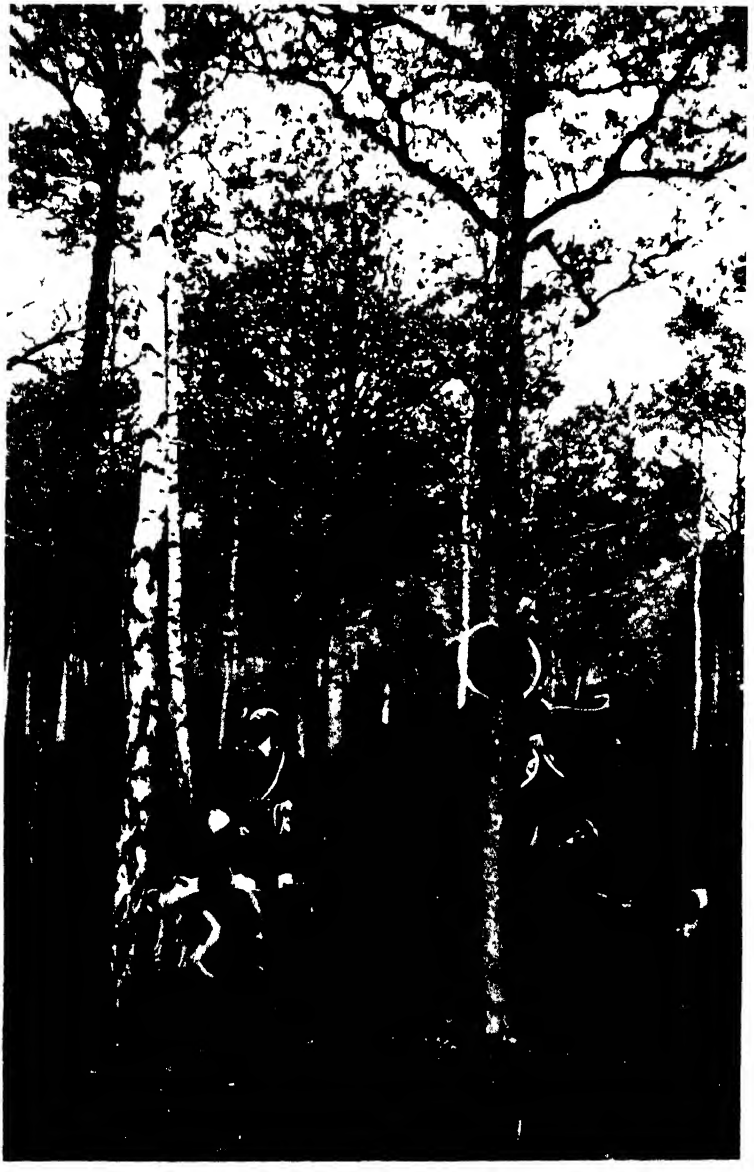

FRENCH HUNTING THE RELAY

AS IN MEDIÆVAL TIMES FRENCH SPORTSMEN EMPLOY RELAYS OF HOUNDS, VARYING IN NUMBER WHICH ARE STATIONED IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE FOREST WHERE THE DEER IS LIKELY TO RUN THESE RELAYS ARE MANAGED BY A *valet de chiens a pied*

ENCHANTMENTS OF THE FIELD

CHRONICLES OF SPORT & WILD LIFE

H. A. Bryden

Author of "Horn & Hound"

LONDON

SEELEY SERVICE & CO. LTD.

1930

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To the

LORD CORNWALLIS

of Linton Park, Maidstone, Kent

C.B.E., D.L., T.D., &c. &c.

Colonel of Yeomanry (retired); for nine years Member of Parliament for Maidstone; for thirty years Chairman of the Kent County Council; Deputy Grand Master of the Freemasons of England; for more than forty years Master and Huntsman of the Linton Beagles; an untiring and devoted worker for his County and in the Field, this book is dedicated by the Author

FOREWORD

THE title of this book, *Enchantments of the Field*, was chosen by my publishers from a somewhat varied list which I submitted to them. In that judgment I fully acquiesce. To hundreds of thousands of men and women of British blood nothing in this world is more full of enchantment than the life of the open air, whether it be spent amid English meadows, or on some quiet moorland stream or shining lake in the hills of Scotland, Ireland or Wales, or among the glorious fjords and mountain scenery of Norway, or on the Alps of Switzerland or France. Such places yield scenes and pleasures that can never fail, even to the very end of a long life.

Foxhunters find a similar enchantment wherever they ride with the gallant pack and share in its delights. So also, in a lesser degree, does the quiet harehunter. The ruder and fiercer pleasures of big-game hunting are well-nigh immeasurable; and the person who has once experienced them can never banish them from his mind. The enchantment of thrusting one's way into a new country, surrounded everywhere by multitudes of great game, yields, as may be seen from the books of the early travellers, pleasures almost beyond belief. In this volume I have dealt with some of the experiences of the older school of hunters of big game.

I have touched in two chapters on French and American hunting, subjects in which the reader may

perchance find something of novelty when compared with English sport. "Scrivelsby and the Champions of England" and "A Warwickshire Pilgrimage" are topics which at first sight seem hardly to belong to *Enchantments of the Field.* A perusal of these chapters will, I think, convince my readers that there is much of the life of the open air about each of them. The Dymokes and Marmions have been great country gentlemen, as well as warriors and hereditary champions, for long centuries; and Shakespeare, as well as Somervile, the author of *The Chace*, have made Warwickshire and its rural life for ever famous. The chapters and the illustrations concerning "Old Sporting Pictures" will I hope prove of real interest.

Certain portions of this book have appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, *The Nineteenth Century and After*, *The Fortnightly Review*, *The Connoisseur*, *The Field*, *Country Life*, *The Sporting and Dramatic News* and *Game and Gun.* I am greatly obliged to Messrs Longmans, Green & Co., proprietors of the late *Edinburgh Review*, and to the editors of the other publications named, for their courtesy in allowing me to reprint here. Similarly I wish to express my sincere thanks to Messrs A. Ackermann & Sons and Messrs Knoedler & Co., both of Bond Street, and Messrs Spink & Co., of King Street, St James's, for permission to reproduce pictures in their collections.

Mr Archibald Thorburn and Mr G. E. Lodge are the artists responsible for the beautiful drawings of peregrines and an Iceland falcon, shown at page 112, and I am very grateful to them for permission to reproduce these pictures. I am indebted also to my old friend,

Mr G. E. Lodge, for information of which I have made use in the chapter on "Scrivelsby and the Champions of England." My thanks are also due to Sir Francis J. Newton, K.C.M.G., C.V.O., High Commissioner in London for Southern Rhodesia, for permission to reproduce the photograph of "An African River" at page 244.

H. A. Bryden.

Tunbridge Wells,
July 1930.

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CHAPTER ONE

Foxhunting, Past & Present

FOXHUNTING, in its proper and modern sense, has endured in England since the reign of Charles II. It will probably continue for another hundred years; but the area in which the sport may be carried on is being steadily circumscribed, and those who are now young, and their successors, will undoubtedly see many changes for the worse during the next fifty years in this the greatest and most inspiring of all English field-sports. That hunting will die very hard is an indisputable fact. It is a sport which has a wonderful appeal to the average healthy man and woman, whether rich or poor, as may be seen any winter day in the English countryside. It is indubitably a natural instinct of mankind; and the great Jorrocks' description of it, "the image of war, without its guilt, and only twenty-five per cent. of its danger," is very hard to better.

In the days when wild game still abounded in England, the "beasts of Venery" were hart, hind, hare, boar and wolf. Then came fallow buck, doe, fox, marten and roe-deer, which were "beasts of chase." Beasts of Venery were "moved" (roused) with the lymer or

lyme-hound and chased with the pack; while beasts of Chase were found by the pack and set going (*enquillez*). Foxes were then looked upon mainly as vermin, to be hunted to their earths and there either killed with terriers or dug out and knocked on the head. The hare was regarded by our mediæval ancestors with much more respect. William Twici, huntsman to Edward II., who wrote a short treatise on hunting (*L'Art de Vénerie*) in Norman French, first translated and printed by the late Sir Henry Dryden, in 1844,[1] opens his essay with this animal. "And why, sir," he says, "will you begin with the hare, rather than with any other beast? I will tell you. Because she is the most marvellous which is on this earth." Twici gives various hunting cries, some of which are still in use; such, for instance, as "Forward, sir, forward!" and "Sha-hou!"—which I take to be the modern "So ho!"—on finding a hare. "Hou, hou!" another cry, may now be looked upon as obsolete. Yet I can remember that twenty years ago, when out with the Hailsham Harriers, an old-fashioned pack then hunting Pevensey Marsh, some of the Sussex farmers and old country folk still used the cry "How, how!" to call upon and encourage hounds.

"Tally ho!" I think, undoubtedly comes from the Norman-French. In "Le Trésor de Vénerie," a rare French hunting MS., written by Hardouin, Seigneur de Fontaines Guérin, Anjou, in or about 1394, the author says that you should sound the chase when the stag is on its feet, and that if anyone sees it he should cry "Thiaulau!"—which, in my judgment, is undoubtedly our modern "Tally-ho." Here is the Seigneur's own early French verse:

"Après vous deves corner chasse,
Quant le cerf est sur pies en place,
Et s'il avient qu'aucun le voye
Qui passe par aucun voye,
Thiaulau doit tantost crier."

Hardouin's quaint MS., written while the Seigneur was imprisoned in the Castle of Meragues, is embellished by drawings of the chase, with the necessary horn-music, noted in the ancient fashion, shown at the top of each picture. This very curious work was first published in 1856 by Monsieur M. H. Michelant, and I count myself fortunate to be the possessor of a copy of so rare a book.

Until Somervile published his fine poem, *The Chace*, in 1735, and Beckford printed his *Thoughts on Hunting*, in 1781, all the honour and the credit of the best treatises concerning hunting lay with the French. The celebrated "Livre de Chasse," of Gaston Phœbus, Comte de Foix et Béarn, a magnificent illuminated MS., produced between 1359 and 1394, is easily the finest of all the French works on hunting. The Count was well known to Froissart, who writes of him and his unhappy son in his famous *Chronicles*. He is said to have possessed eight hundred couples of hounds and dogs, four at least of which—Tristan, Hector, Brun and Rolland—came from England. The Comte de Foix's hounds were magnificently lodged, and the wonderful illustrations show with what infinite care they were looked after. The well-known *Maister of Game*, written by Edward of Langley, Duke of York, for the use of Henry V., when Prince of Wales, was little more than a translation of the "Livre de Chasse." Turbervile's *Booke of Hunting*,

published in the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1576), is excellently illustrated in the costumes of the period. But the letterpress is no more than a free translation of *La Vénerie*, written by Jaques de Foilloux in 1561, with further excerpts from Gaston de Foix and other writers. Turbervile's book, like that of the Comte de Foix, shows with what care hounds were lodged and tended. There is an excellent picture of the kennel, showing even the very straw-posts against which hounds could rub and clean themselves.

The Englishman deals here and there with foxhunting, but his methods are taken mainly from the French work. The fox can be attracted by a trail (trayne) to a stand, where he may be killed in an evening with the cross-bow. "The hunting of the Foxe," says Turbervile, "is pleasant, for he maketh an excellent crye, because his sent is very hot, and he never flieth farre before the houndes, but holdeth the strongest coverts . . . and when he perceiveth that he may no longer endure nor stande up before the houndes, then will he take the earth and will trust to his castles there." Hunting the fox to his earth was, as I have already hinted, the real foxhunt of those days; our ancestors having plenty of deer with which to amuse themselves, and not having yet learned the delights of a rousing fox-chase in the open.

Digging was a real art, and Turbervile gives the materials thus: "The instruments to dig withal must be these, sharpe pointed Spades, Howes or Mattocks and Pickaxes, a Colerake and a payre of Clampes or Holdfasts, Shovells both shodde and bare, an Axe and a sharpe paring Spade." Full directions follow, and terriers were always in readiness for the fray. "In this

order of battell, a nobleman or gentleman may march to besiege the Foxe and Badgerd, in their strongest holes and castles. And may break their Casmats [casemates], Platformes, Parapets, and worke to them with Mynes and Counter-Mynes, until they get their Skynnes, to make furres and myttens." If foxes were taken from the earth alive, with the tongs or clamps, then, says Turbervile, " put them into a sacke or poke, to hunt with your Terriers in your gardens or close courtes, at your pleasure. He that will be present at such pastimes may do well to be booted, for I have lent a Foxe or Badgerd ere nowe, a piece of my hose, and the skin and fleshe for companie, which he never restored againe. Let these few precepts suffice for the hunting of Foxes and Badgerds."

Such was Tudor foxhunting. Nevertheless hounds, even in very early days, when the fox was thus hunted and destroyed as vermin, were maintained for the pursuit of these animals. In the Wardrobe Accounts of the time of Edward I., for instance, there is a payment of nine pounds three shillings to the King's foxhunter for the keep of foxhounds at a halfpenny a day apiece. The season was a short one. From the " Charta de Forest " it seems that foxhunting then began on Christmas Day and ended at the Feast of Annunciation (25th March) —three months only! Hare-hunting then opened at Michaelmas and finished at the end of February. Hart (or stag) from 8th July to Holyrood Day (14th September); hind, 14th September to Candlemas (2nd February). It is difficult to say why the foxhunting period was so short. It is to be noted that in the time of Elizabeth foxhunting differed somewhat in the north

of England. There the "Gazehound" (greyhound) was employed to hunt fox as well as hare in open country, "wherewith they [the followers] are more delighted than with the prey itself." Thus writes the learned Caius, whose *English Dogges* was published in 1576.

By the time of James I., hunting was undergoing certain changes. The wolf had disappeared and wild boar were becoming rare, even in the more inaccessible parts of the country. In Wiltshire, for instance, then a very remote county, the last wild boar was slain by Sir Richard Grobham, in the reign of Elizabeth, in Grovely Woods, near Wilton, still even now a splendid woodland. Grovely was then part of the great forest tract known as Cranborne Chase, which extended to Warminster and beyond. The handsome tomb of Sir Richard and his lady may be seen in Wishford Church, in the delightful Wylye valley. Wild red deer and fallow deer, which in the early years of Henry VIII. were very numerous, were a hundred years later steadily declining, and by the reign of Charles I. were nothing like so plentiful as they had been. It is significant that Charles I., two days only before the battle of Naseby, was hunting a fallow buck from Fawsley Park (the seat of the Knightleys), near Daventry, a locality nowadays so well known to followers of the Pytchley and Grafton foxhounds. This was, no doubt, a park deer and not a wild fallow buck.

The growing scarcity of red deer, except in the wilder parts of the country—as, for instance, Exmoor, Dartmoor, the New Forest and the Lakeland fells—was sadly hastened by poachers during the troubled period of the Civil War. The savage game laws of the early kings had fallen

much into desuetude, and while lords, knights, gentry and commoners were at each other's throats during the struggle between Charles I. and his Parliament, poachers, deer-stealers and soldiers — especially Parliamentary soldiers—all hastened the downfall of the wild red deer.

With this decline, the great landowners and squires of England began to look about them for fresh quarry, especially for an animal that would yield them a longer and straighter chase than that of the circling hare. They pitched at length—in the reign of Charles II.—on the fox, and thenceforth foxhunting proper, as we understand it, began to enter upon its long and gallant life. That indefatigable hunter, James II., was already pursuing the fox in his brother's reign. Thomas Fownes, a very famous sportsman, who bought the estate of Stapleton-Iwerne, County Dorset, in 1654, maintained a pack of foxhounds there for many years and is said to have bred the best hounds in England. This pack afterwards went to Mr Bowes, in Yorkshire, and no doubt became the progenitors of many good foxhounds in the north. It is worthy of note that the estate of Stapleton-Iwerne was, in 1745, purchased by Julines Beckford, father of the famous author of *Thoughts on Hunting*. In these pleasant Dorset fields, and the neighbouring Cranborne Chase, Peter Beckford hunted hare and fox, and perfected himself to such excellent purpose in the pursuit of both animals.

In 1679 there were maintained at Charlton, near Goodwood,[2] two packs of foxhounds, one of them belonging to the Duke of Monmouth, the other to Lord Grey of Wark. Grey was the man who so badly let down the Duke in his ill-fated attempt on the throne of England in 1685. Monmouth, who was a keen sportsman, skilled

in all athletic exercises, and was wont to stay with Lord Grey at Uppark, near Charlton, used to say that when he was King he could come and keep his Court there. The Master and manager of these hounds was Mr Roper, a Kentish gentleman, brother-in-law of Squire Butler of Amberley, M.P. for Arundel. Roper retired to France during the brief reign of James II., but returned some time after the revolution and established a fresh pack of foxhounds in conjunction with the Duke of Bolton. This pack soon attracted the notice of many distinguished sportsmen, including the Earl of Burlington, "the Vetruvius of his day," who built at Charlton a banqueting hall. The hunting company included the Marquis of Hartington, the Earl of Halifax, the Duke of Richmond, Lord March, the Duke of Montrose, Lord N. Poulett, Lords William and Henry Beauclerk, General Compton and the Lords Forester, Hervey, Harcourt and others. William III. and the Grand Duke of Tuscany—then the King's guest in England—came down and enjoyed some foxhunting proper, and the fame of Charlton and its sport spread rapidly. Old Mr Roper carried on until 1722, when, having reached his eighty-fifth year, he died, after a long and vigorous career, in the field near Findon, just as a fox was found. The Duke of Bolton remained Master of the Charlton Hunt till 1728, when, having married Lavinia Fenton, the famous actress, then playing in *The Beggar's Opera*, he seems to have lost his zest for hunting and gave up.

In 1720 the second Duke of Richmond acquired Goodwood, and thenceforward for many years took the keenest interest in the Charlton Hunt. He became Master of the Hounds in 1728, and during his reign sport was

extraordinarily good. The most famous chase of this period was the historic hunt of 26th January 1738. The hounds, finding at 7.45 A.M. in East Dean Wood, ran for ten hours, and killed their fox at 5.50 P.M., on the Arundel river — a great performance. Out of a distinguished company, which included the Duke of Richmond, the Duke of St Albans, Lord Harcourt, Lord Ossulston, Lord H. Beauclerk, Sir H. Liddell, Ralph Jennison, Esq., Master of the King's Buckhounds, and others who saw the find, only three, the Duke of Richmond, Brigadier-General Hawley and Billy Ives, Yeoman Pricker to the Royal Pack, were up at the kill. Of these, General Hawley is thus mentioned in a curious MS. account of the hunt, which, framed and glazed, hung for many years in a farmhouse at Funtington: "To the immortal honour of 17 stone and at least as many campaigns!" Hawley was the man who, eight years later, lost the battle of Falkirk to Prince Charlie's Highland army.

There are clear evidences that at this period—the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century—foxhunting proper was making its way in other parts of the kingdom. George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, after destroying a noble patrimony by his long career of ruinous follies, retired to a Yorkshire estate at Helmsley, in 1685, and there, in the country now known as the Sinnington, maintained a pack of foxhounds which occasionally hunted deer. He was then nearly at the end of his tether, and died of a chill at Kirkby Moorside, in 1687. Pope has described the miserable end of this once great noble:

"In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half-hung,
The floors of plaister, and the walls of dung,

On once a flock-bed, but repair'd with straw,
With tape-ty'd curtains never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed,
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
Great Villiers lies! alas, how changed from him
That life of pleasure and that soul of whim!" [3]

Addison, in a curious article in *The Freeholder* (1715), pokes fun at the Northumbrian Jacobite foxhunters, one of whom had arrived in town "in order to give his testimony for one of the rebels, whom he knew to be a very fair sportsman." In another number of *The Freeholder* he represents the Tory foxhunter as complaining that there had been no good weather since the revolution, and expatiating on "the fine weather they used to have in Charles the Second's reign."

Early in the eighteenth century, George Montagu, second Earl of Halifax, lineal ancestor of the present Lord North, of Wroxton Abbey, was hunting the fox in the neighbourhood of Banbury. He it was who planted the covert of Warden Hill, still a famous preserve of foxes in the Bicester and Warden Hill Hunt. Scott, in his great romance of *Rob Roy*, gives a stirring picture of a Northumbrian foxhunt at this period (1715), in which Diana Vernon and her loutish foxhunting cousins, the Osbaldistones, are shown in the chase.

William Somervile, author of that well-known classic, *The Chace*, which was first published in 1735, describes with wonderful accuracy all the various phases of hunting. He is another witness of credit to the fact that at this period foxhunting, as we know it, was already well established in English fields. Somervile, Squire of Edstone Hall, near Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, was

born in 1677, and died there in 1742. He kept hounds during the greater part of his life and hunted fox and hare near Edstone and in the neighbouring Cotswold country, where he also possessed the estate of Somervile-Aston. He kept "about twelve couple of harriers, bred chiefly between the small Cotswold beagle and the southern hound; six couple of foxhounds, rather rough and wire-haired; and five couple of otterhounds, which in the winter made an addition to the foxhounds."

In Mr Charles Simpson's very handsome book, *The Harboro' Country*—published recently, with many excellent illustrations in colour and black-and-white by the author—the beginnings of foxhunting in Leicestershire are clearly shown. The father of Leicestershire foxhunting was undoubtedly Thomas Boothby, of Tooley Park, who was born in 1677—a good vintage year, which claimed Somervile also—and was hunting a pack of hounds in 1697, just fifty years after the battle of Naseby. Naseby Field, it may be recalled, lies in the very heart of the finest foxhunting country in England. Thomas Boothby hunted foxes, and foxes only, for fifty-five years—he died in 1752—and may be correctly described as the first Master who hunted them in what was later known as the Quorn Country. "Foxes," says Mr Simpson, "were truly wild and treated as vermin when Boothby began hunting, and they were in consequence scarce in places and widely scattered. . . . The fox, in fact, would not have escaped the risk of being exterminated like the wolf—a fate which would assuredly have been his had not the energy and enthusiasm of men such as Boothby and Meynell founded the sport of foxhunting in Leicestershire."

Boothby is credited by some people, including Mr Simpson, with being the first inventor of the modern straight hunting-horn. This is not quite correct. He shortened the long straight hunting-horn, then measuring some eighteen inches, which seems to have come into vogue a little before 1700,[4] and to have endured until superseded by the great and unwieldy French horn.

The old curved horn of the Plantagenets, Tudors and Stuarts went out of fashion by 1690, or a little later, and the awkward, long, straight horn then had but a short vogue. It is curious to note that John Peel used an ancient curved, metal hunting-horn, probably dating back to Stuart times. The huntsman of the present Llangibby hounds still carries a horn of similar shape—a very interesting survival. The big French horn was invented by the Comte de Dampierre in the early part of the reign of Louis XV. The fashion spread quickly to England and remained for about sixty years, after which that cumbrous instrument was generally superseded by the modern straight horn. In a fine hunting picture by Wootton, at Longleat, painted about 1730, the Viscount Weymouth of that time is to be seen with his pack at the death of a fox, his brother-in-law, Lord Althorp, having just rescued the quarry from the hounds. An African boy-groom and English whipper-in are to be seen, each blowing triumphantly on huge French horns, which they carry over their shoulders. This painting is also good evidence that the country gentlemen of England were hunting fox pretty regularly at this period.

Another historic figure of early foxhunting days was

Mr William Draper of Beswick Hall, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, in the present Holderness country, who, it is said, "bred, fed, and hunted the staunchest pack of foxhounds in Europe."

"Upon an income of £700 [probably worth more than £2000 of our money] he brought up creditably eleven sons and daughters, kept a stable of excellent hunters besides a carriage with horses suitable for my lady and her daughters. He lived in the old, honest style of his country, killing every month a good ox of his own feeding and priding himself on maintaining a substantial table, but with no foreign kickshaws. . . . He was always up during the hunting season at 4 o'clock, mounted on one of his nags at five, himself bringing forth his hounds, who knew every note of their master's voice."

In the evening, on his return, often with a brace of trophies, he entertained his friends with old-fashioned hospitality. Good old October was the liquor drunk, and the squire's first toast was: "All the brushes in Christendom." Mr Draper began foxhunting in 1726, having, it is said, been goaded into it by the wholesale destruction of his lambs. He was liberally assisted by his neighbour, Sir Mark Constable, and his daughter, Diana Draper, aided him as whipper-in. Miss Diana had a rare voice, cheered hounds lustily and was invaluable in the field. "God bless her," adds the writer of the sketch of this sporting family,[5] "for a fine plucky Englishwoman." "This chaste Diana," it is added, "never married, died at a good old age and lies buried near her father at Market Weighton." Squire Draper himself flourished till the age of eighty, when, like old

Mr Roper of the Charlton Hunt, he died on horseback in the open field.

We have now seen some of the beginnings of modern foxhunting. From the middle of the eighteenth century great strides were being made. In 1750 Earl Spencer was hunting the present Pytchley country. The fifth Duke of Beaufort, who had up to that time still maintained a pack of light-coloured staghounds, changed to foxhunting about this period, having, it is said, been converted by a chance run with a good fox from Silk Wood, in 1762. Lord Townshend and Mr Coke, of Holkham, were pursuing fox in West Norfolk from 1756 to 1810. The Earls of Berkeley had for centuries hunted a vast country extending from Berkeley Castle to the confines of London, and probably changed from deer to fox towards 1750. It is certain that the famous Tom Oldaker, immortalised in the painting by Ben Marshall, was hunting fox with that pack from 1774 to 1793.

Sir Thomas Gascoigne was hunting in Yorkshire from 1764 to 1773, when he sold his pack of foxhounds to the Earl of Egremont, who hunted them from Petworth, Sussex, till near the end of the century. The Duke of Rutland began hunting fox from Belvoir in 1762, and the Pelham family (afterwards Earls of Yarborough) were at that period busy with the ancestors of the present Brocklesby hounds, which date from 1700. Mr William Bethell was pursuing fox in Holderness from 1765, and Mr Osbaldeston, of Hunmanby (father of "Squire" Osbaldeston), and Mr Darley, of Aldby Park, were at work in a part of the same district of Yorkshire from 1746 onwards. In South Notts Mr John Musters was

hunting a wide country from the year 1775. The Fitzwilliam family were maintaining foxhounds at Milton —still the headquarters of that famous pack—by the year 1760; while the great John Warde and Mr Wrightson were, in 1778, busy with foxhounds in the present Warwickshire domains. In the New Forest Mr H. V. Gilbert was pursuing the fox from 1781 to 1800. The Middleton Hunt, Yorkshire, dates from 1759. In 1778 Mr John Corbet, afterwards Master of the Warwickshire pack in one of its most glorious periods (1791-1811), having changed from hare to fox in his native Shropshire some time before 1778, was at that date busy with reynard in the Meriden district of Warwickshire. In many other parts of England foxhunting was being pursued by country gentlemen with packs whose records have not always come down to us.

Foxhunters undoubtedly owe much to two striking figures of that period. Of these, one was Peter Beckford, of Stapleton-Iwerne, Dorset, the author of the ever-famous *Thoughts on Hunting*; the other was Hugo Meynell, of Quorndon Hall, Leicestershire, who did probably more than any other man, save Beckford, to improve the methods of foxhunting and the breed of the foxhound. All authorities agree that in the care and management of hounds, the pursuit of the fox, the duties of huntsmen and whippers-in and feeders, the precepts of Beckford are as valuable at the present day as when they were first published in 1781. Beckford's book is still delightful reading, full of humour as well as of sound hunting lore. His description of a foxhunt, in Letter XIII., is even better than "Nimrod's" much-vaunted account of one in Osbaldeston's time. He is

wonderfully modern, and his precepts are undeniable. Thus:

"It is the dash of the foxhound which distinguishes *him*, as truly as the motto of William of Wickham distinguishes *us*. A pack of harriers, if they have time, may kill a fox; but I defy them to kill him in the style in which a fox ought to be killed; they must hunt him down.[6] If you intend to tire him out, you must expect to be tired also yourself. I never wish a chase to be less than one hour, or to exceed two; it will seldom be longer, unless there be a fault somewhere; either in the day, in the huntsman or the hounds. What Lord Chatham once said of a battle is particularly applicable to a foxchase; it should be *short*, *sharp* and *decisive*!"[7]

In the fine old house at Stapleton-Iwerne there hung till recently—they may still be there—several paintings of Beckford's hounds, by Sartorius. These hounds are of excellent character, but somewhat lacking in size and bone compared with those of the present day. This characteristic is easily to be realized by a survey of paintings or prints of eighteenth-century foxhounds in the collections of great houses—such as Goodwood, Longleat, Althorp, Welbeck and elsewhere. In Beckford's and Meynell's time the foxhound was in process of evolution. You may see the finished product by the early years of the nineteenth century. In Weaver's picture of Mr John Corbet and the Warwickshire hounds, for instance, painted in 1812, the hounds are, as has been pointed out by that famous sportsman, the eighteenth Lord Willoughby de Broke, as good in every detail as hounds of the present day. Perfection, as modern experts regard it, was reached probably by 1890.

Since then, breeders have tampered a good deal with the make and shape of hounds and have produced a large number of foxhounds standing much over at the knees, with malformed forefeet and shoulders and a too great redundance of bone. Specimens of such hounds reached the extreme limits of mischief in hound shows, at Peterborough and elsewhere, between 1905 and 1914, and have reappeared since 1918. Some of these hounds were no better than magnificent cripples which a season or two of hard work would suffice to break down. The mischief has at length been realised, but it will take several generations of foxhounds to breed out the faults thus produced. The modern hound, if much faster than its predecessors of Beckford's time, has certainly lost some of the fine qualities of the old English hound, especially in voice and scenting power, and keenness. These qualities have probably been bred out in the desire to cope with the haste and hurry required for the modern chase. Again, it is, unfortunately, a well-established fact that in many countries hounds have learned to depend too much upon their huntsman and too little on their own powers, and have thus become slacker and less self-reliant than their ancestors.

Hugo Meynell, who did so much to change the character of foxhunting, was in his early youth a hare-hunter pure and simple. His father kept harriers, and the family and hunt servants were wont to sally out on foot carrying hunting-poles. Than hare-hunting, it may be remarked, there is no better education for the youthful sportsman; and it would be well for the modern fox-hunting field if every member of it had been entered to beagles. Meynell bought Quorndon Hall from Earl

Ferrers in 1753, got together a big pack of hounds and started the hunt which has since been known to all the world as the Quorn. He married, as his second wife, in 1757, a Miss Boothby, granddaughter of his predecessor, the famous Thomas Boothby, already mentioned. Meynell had in his earlier days somewhat curious methods. He hunted at one time with a huge pack of one hundred couples, which waited in a field outside the covert, where a few hounds were drawing for a fox. So soon as the fox was on foot, away went the whole pack, amid a most glorious tumult. This wild practice was, however, very wisely abandoned, and Meynell in the course of fifty years evolved the style of hunting which now exists. In his later years he hunted with twenty couples. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, sport with these hounds eclipsed that shown by any other pack in England; subscribers and visitors rapidly increased, and Meynell and his hounds acquired the fame which has ever since been theirs.

Overriding of hounds now came into prominence, and it is clear that the great Hugo was troubled by it in the last years of his reign. He finished his long Mastership in 1800 and was succeeded by the Earl of Sefton, after whom followed Lord Foley (1802-1806), Mr T. Assheton Smith (1806-1817), "Squire" Osbaldeston (1817-1821 and 1823-1827), and Sir Bellingham Graham (1821-1823). These and the subsequent years may be described as the "Galloping Days," when Melton and Market Harborough became fashionable; when men went out to steeplechase rather than to hunt, and were many of them riding *at* one another most of the time. Sir James Musgrave once jumped on to Osbaldeston, broke his

leg badly and never stopped to apologise. "Hounds are running! What does it matter?" was all he could vouchsafe to the crippled "Squire." Not all hunting men, however, even at Melton, were as selfish or as callous as this.

So they hunted in those wild days. Melton and Harborough were full of wealth; men rode the finest horses in the world—pace was everything. Assheton Smith was the greatest flyer of them all. He stopped at nothing and would always be with his hounds. But, what with his own pressure and that of his field, hounds were often sadly overdriven and lost many a fox in consequence.

Osbaldeston, in his *Autobiography*, recently edited by Mr E. D. Cuming, gives a fair sample of the jealous and unruly fields of those days. A fox had gone to ground near Quenby Hall, and Osbaldeston had asked his field not to ride after the animal when ejected, but to give the hounds a fair chance. They all assented. Yet, when the fox was bolted after a quarter of an hour, "the whole crowd," writes Osbaldeston, "galloped after him and did not pull up until he was lost to sight. . . . The pack got mingled with 300 horsemen, never saw the fox, nor, of course, hunted him a yard." So much for a Quorn hunt of that period! Osbaldeston at once took his hounds home.

There is a very curious painting by Ferneley, entitled *A Scene near Melton*, of about this period, painted for Sir Hugh Hume Campbell, which suggests, in caricature, a hunt of this kind. A leading horseman gallops alongside the fox. One or two men are in the brook behind; a hound or two and other red-coated men are nearing the

water. One hound is trampled down by a horse and his rider. Then comes a huge field careering over fences. Far behind, in the background, the pack is faintly indicated following in the distance!

Nevertheless, in spite of such dreadful lapses, there was much fine sport shown by the rising generation of foxhunters in all parts of England. The men who hunted for the most part knew not fear, and their performances, staying powers and hardiness were prodigious. In other regions than Leicestershire famous Masters were hunting hounds fairly and reasonably, with fields which they were usually able to control. They worthily upheld the great sport of foxhunting and gave enormous pleasure to vast numbers of followers.

The great days of English foxhunting may be regarded as ranging from 1815 to 1878. During that period the landed interest flourished exceedingly. The larger farmers had made a great deal of money during the long French war and had left considerable fortunes to their successors, who lived handsomely, put down good cellars of port and hunted freely. The squires and aristocracy were at the summit of their fortunes; rents had much increased and there was scarce a cloud in the sky. The Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1848 was the first symptom of impending change. There is a curious little story—a true one, of which the writer has knowledge—of a Suffolk farmer in a large way of business near Sudbury, at this time, which is very suggestive. Before the Repeal of the Corn Laws this farmer had a good print of Sir Robert Peel hanging in his dining-room in a place of honour. When the Act of Repeal was passed he went to the engraving and turned it with its face to

the wall. So it remained for thirty years, until death had quenched the long hatred.

We owe much to "Nimrod"[8]—pompous, patronising and diffuse as he too often is. Without his ready pen we should have lost the vivid pictures of the great figures of the hunting world between 1800 and 1830. His popularity was immense. When he began to write for the old *Sporting Magazine* its income was £1800. In less than two years, thanks to his articles, the figures had risen to £5250! His famous *Quarterly Review* article on "The Chase" is the best of all his writings, probably for the reason that it was severely edited by J. G. Lockhart, son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott. "Nimrod" was himself a fine and courageous horseman, an expert horse-dealer, and knew all there was to be known about hunting. His later years were sad enough. Extravagant and always in financial difficulty, he retired to Calais in 1831 and thenceforth did most of his work from there. His last years were full of trouble. In the winter of 1842-1843 he sustained a severe fall and was injured internally. His "Life and Times," then appearing in *Fraser's Magazine*, was abruptly broken off by the editor, with the public and rather cruel intimation that it was discontinued owing to the "extreme volubility" of the author. The last blow was the painful quarrel with Surtees, who had just then published *Handley Cross*, in which he had pilloried "Nimrod" as "Pomponius Ego." "Nimrod" demanded an explanation, and in reply Surtees stuck to his guns and wrote that the likeness was intended. These and other worries and altercations, together with his illness, completed Apperley's misfortunes, and he died in London, of peritonitis, in May

1843. And so, after all his junketings—for he had warmed both hands eagerly at the fire of life—poor "Nimrod," long severed from his family, crept home to make his end, "returning," as he says in one of his last letters, "like a hare, to die in his own country." Doubtless, when he thus wrote, he was thinking of Goldsmith's lines:

> "And as a hare, when hounds and horns pursue,
> Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
> I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
> Here to return and die at home at last."

R. S. Surtees, who deals chiefly with the period 1820 to 1850, has given us in his hunting novels many life-like and most amusing pictures of the foxhunting past. Two or three of his works, uneven and unfair as they often are, will live, no doubt, for centuries. But his outlook is a bitter one: he loves to show the ugly side of human nature, and how seldom he draws a gentleman, though he himself was descended from an ancient line of Northumbrian squires! We gather that Surtees was somewhat of a misanthrope. He must, in his time, have met and forgathered with hundreds of honest and pleasant English foxhunters, yet he never portrays any of them in his books. His pen, broadly humorous as it is, is too often dipped in gall.

Hunting in the last century continued with unabated vigour and enjoyment till 1880. The number of packs had greatly increased, and sport was extraordinarily good. Mr Charles Simpson, in *The Harboro' Country*, has reproduced the hunting diary of Mr Tailby, a great Master of Hounds, who flourished in Leicestershire from

1856 to 1878. This diary gives an excellent idea of the wonderful sport enjoyed in those days. Since 1880 the sport has slowly, yet steadily, deteriorated, and, except in favoured countries, it must be admitted that hunting is not what it was. The causes of this decline are not far to seek. The losses of farmers, who have never recovered from the bad times between 1879 and 1895, and the decay of the landed gentry, much accelerated by hostile legislation and unfair taxation, were followed by the ruinous results of the Great War. Barbed wire has been, and is, a terrible foe to hunting as it used to be enjoyed; in many countries jumping is now almost impossible over large areas.

In comparatively few hunts can it be said that hunters can now ride at their fences with anything like the old confidence and freedom. The increase of population and of small houses, bungalows and poultry-farming are, except in the wilder and more remote parts of the country, of course, all against modern hunting. Pheasants and covert shooting, again, are adverse factors. Mr Charles Richardson's *The Complete Foxhunter*—a first-rate book, by an expert, published in 1909—gives a good picture of some of the difficulties of present-day sport. Next to barbed wire, that fell enemy, the vast increase of motor traffic, which has changed the whole course of country life in England, is—it is to be confessed—the greatest foe of hunting folk. A year or so ago, in the Whaddon Chase country, Lord Dalmeny, the Master, "was compelled," writes a correspondent of *Country Life*, "to leave it to the motor division to say whether they or his hounds should hunt the fox, and, if the former, then that he could not see much point in keeping

hounds out." "In another country last season," says the same writer, "char-a-banc purveyors were offering their patrons 'a royal fox-hunt; five shillings there and back.'" Such are some of the modern features of this noble sport!

Nevertheless, hunting still struggles bravely along under very adverse conditions. It is not so strong as before the war, when 426 packs of hounds were hunting in these islands. But, considering the dire results of the great wrestle with Prussian militarism, it is wonderful that during the season of 1929-1930 no fewer than 401 packs of hounds were in the field in England, Scotland and Ireland. Hunting, under crippled conditions, will probably last for the greater part of another century in the wilder parts of the country. After that time the finest of English field-sports will probably have come to an end and the land will know it no more.

NOTES

[1] According to Sir Henry Dryden, Twici and other sportsmen of his time hunted the fox on foot.

[2] *Records of the Old Charlton Hunt.* By the Earl of March.

[3] It is still a matter of dispute whether Buckingham died at an inn or private house in Kirkby Moorside. His body, subsequently buried in Westminster Abbey, was almost certainly embalmed in a house next to the King's Head Inn. There is a very curious entry in the Parish Register, evidently in the Yorkshire vernacular; it runs as follows: "Burial. 1687. April 17th. George Viluas, Lord dooke of bookingham." This refers doubtless to the internal parts of the deceased Duke, which had burial at Kirkby Moorside.

[4] The Holcombe Harriers, which hunt in Lancashire, a very ancient pack with a history of more than two hundred years, possess one of these long, straight horns; the foot huntsman, another curious survival, still carries it.

[5] From an old number of *The Sporting Register.*

[6] I would qualify this by stating that in these days (1927) at least two packs of harriers, the Cotley and the Axe Vale, can kill a fox in perfect foxhound style. These are light-coloured, West Country hounds, which hunt hare and fox alternately and with equal success.

[7] Mr Otho Paget, in his excellent edition of *Thoughts on Hunting* (Methuen, 1900), points out rightly that modern hounds are faster than in Beckford's time, and suggests not less than thirty-five minutes, or more than one hour and forty minutes, in a grass country, as a fair estimate for these days.

[8] "Nimrod" was the *nom de plume* of Charles James Apperley, the famous sporting writer.

CHAPTER TWO

French Hunting since the War

NOT long before the outbreak of the Great War *The Nineteenth Century and After* published an article by the present writer which gave some account of French hunting as it then flourished. At that time there were no fewer than 320 packs of hounds hunting in France, two-thirds of them pursuing their sport in the great forests and woodlands which still cover a large extent of terrain in that country. The animals hunted were, and still are, red deer, roe, wild fallow deer, now become very scarce, wolf, wild boar, hare, and occasionally foxes. The fox, it may be at once admitted, is not yet a popular beast of chase in France. It is still regarded as vermin, and is hunted by only a few packs of hounds, of which the most popular are the Pau and Biarritz-Bayonne hunts—which are maintained in the English fashion—or by small establishments. Still, it is to be noted that foxhunting is slowly gaining ground in France. Much more often, however, the fox is slain with guns at shooting-parties, and the numbers killed at these *chasses à tir*, as they are termed in France, are very considerable.

During the war hunting entirely ceased in every part of France. The struggle was for the most part being fought out on French soil, where the devastation wrought was horrible in all its details. In the minds of all Frenchmen this was no time to be pursuing game with cheerful

horn and the stirring cry of hounds. The whole thing came to an end. So strong was the universal sentiment against anything in the shape of hunting that the late Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson recorded in his diary (2nd February 1915): " . . . the feeling which is arising against us for various causes, partly because of our present want of enterprise, *partly from our hunting and shooting*, partly because of our not having conscription." In fact, so keen was this sentiment in France that two or three very small packs of harriers and beagles, which had been brought over from England in the winter of 1914-1915 for a little sport behind the lines, had to be summarily suppressed. And yet, during his years of campaigning in the Peninsula, Wellington and his officers maintained without difficulty a pack of foxhounds and another of harriers while fighting vigorously and victoriously against the French.

The war, then, put a sudden and complete end to all hunting throughout the length and breadth of France. The numbers of hounds were seriously reduced, as, indeed, they were later on in England; and, as food became ever scarcer and more precious, hounds were everywhere destroyed, though not without compunction, especially where the more ancient and valuable breeds were concerned—breeds, for example, such as the old Vendéen hound (smooth-coated and rough), the blue hound of Gascony, the Saintongeois and the Nivernois hounds, the fine strains of the old Persac, Pindray and Céris hounds, mostly white with orange markings. Other rare strains of hound, such as the beautiful Porcelaine, the stout Poitou and Normandy hound, the *Briquet d'Artois* (a harrier), and other valuable races, have all

suffered very severely by the war; with some of them the task of reviving the breed completely seems almost insurmountable.

The end of the war saw France terribly exhausted, far more even than was the case with us in Britain. She had lost by death 1,500,000 of her best men, with hundreds of thousands more disabled by wounds and sickness. Great tracts of country, much of it good hunting terrain, had been laid waste, and for the time utterly destroyed. All her inhabitants were more or less impoverished by the dire struggle they had gone through. Thus the revival of hunting, fond though the country gentlemen and aristocracy are of the sport, was bound to be a slow and difficult one.

France, it may be noted, still possesses an aristocracy, though it is nearly one hundred and forty years since the Revolution. A glance at the *Annuaire de la Vénerie*—the directory or *Baily* of French hunting—before the war would suffice to convince any reader of that fact. It is certain that more than a third of the masters of French packs of hounds for the season 1913-1914 were men of title, largely descendants of the old French nobility existing before 1790. These families, like our own landed gentry, have suffered severely, and are not in a position to maintain *équipages* (hunting establishments) as freely as they were doing before August 1914. Still, the process of restarting packs of hounds, especially since 1920, has been slowly and painfully going forward. During these years it has been extremely difficult, notwithstanding many inquiries, to gain any complete or reliable information concerning this process of re-establishment. The republication for

the first time since the beginning of the war of the excellent *Annuaire de la Vénerie Française* for the season 1926-1927, however, with the results of my personal inquiries, enabled me to form a reasonable impression of the present status of French hunting. The publishers of the *Annuaire de la Vénerie* themselves apologised for the incompleteness of their first issue, setting forth the difficulties of obtaining complete information over so large an extent of country, and the backwardness of correspondents in yielding necessary particulars. They apologised for manifest lacunæ and promised better results for later issues. I hear, too, from private sources that fresh packs are being slowly and with considerable difficulty organised. It is noticeable that single masterships are less frequent than before the war, and that many establishments are run by several joint-masters, or by the association of several adjacent landowners. Such associations are, it is almost needless to point out, always more difficult of management than in the case of a single Master of Hounds, who forms his own opinions and follows for the most part his own ideas.

There were then some 120 to 125 packs of hounds published as hunting in France. This is a sad falling off from the 320 packs, or thereabouts, maintained by our neighbours across the Channel prior to the fateful year 1914. I have reason to believe, however, from the advice of a French correspondent, that other packs have been formed and are forming; and I think it more than probable that nearly 150 packs would be a fair estimate of those now in existence.

In Britain we have recovered much more completely. During 1913-1914 some 436 packs of hounds were

hunting deer, fox, and hare in the British Isles. We have recovered so well that from 323 packs, to which we had been reduced by 1924-1925, we had advanced to 401 packs during 1929-1930.

It is probable, however, that neither we nor our French allies will ever again attain to the number of packs in the field before the war. Circumstances are against such a consummation. Lack of means, the decline of the landed gentry, the spread of poultry-farming, the enlargement of suburban areas, the increase of motor traffic, and the spread of barbed-wire fencing are strong reasons for predicting that hunting in England will during the next century be steadily circumscribed in its operations. In France, where vast forests and great tracts of wild country still abound, the process will be considerably slower than with us. The destruction of hounds in France during the war was, from all I can gather, greater in proportion even than with us, and the recovery therefore is much slower. From 7615 couples existing in England in 1913, our packs were reduced by the year 1918 to 2900 couples, which means that nearly 10,000 hounds had to be destroyed, or sent abroad, from lack of means to feed them during the worst years of the war. The French never had so many hounds as we had, and they had to " put down " far more in proportion. However, things are quietly on the mend in French hunting circles, and by the importation of English hounds and the slow but steady increase in the various races of French hounds remaining there is now fair prospect of a recovery from the unhappy state of things which hunting folk were confronted with in November 1918.

In a survey of the lists of hunting establishments now

existing across the Channel one is struck by the great increase in quite small packs of hounds when compared with the better days before 1914. Little *meutes*, or packs, of from four to eight or ten couples only, are by no means infrequent. These, it may be hoped and predicted, may grow in time, and with better days, to more considerable proportions.

Before taking a glance at the various packs of hounds now hunting in France it may not be uninteresting to say a few words on the animals hunted. France is still a country of great woodlands. Before the war eighteen per cent. of the land consisted of forest, the total area being some 36,700 square miles. The eastern and more mountainous parts of the country are the most densely wooded, but in other regions great forests still exist. The forest of Orleans covers 145 square miles, Fontainebleau, 66, Compiègne, 56, and at Rambouillet, Villers Cotterets, and many other places, huge tracts of woodland are still to be found. One-third of these forest regions belongs to the State, or to communes and public institutions. Almost all these tracts yield hunting. Most of them are well provided with ridings, radiating, as at Compiègne, from the centre and affording good galloping to the followers of the hunt. There is not, of course, anything like the amount of jumping that we have in England; but it is quite a mistake to suppose that leading French sportsmen are not practised "leppers." The annual Horse Show at Olympia has long since exploded that idea, which probably owed something of its origin to Beckford's encounter with a French huntsman while hunting the stag. In the course of the chase Beckford had jumped a big double, with two ditches, and called to

the *piqueur*,[1] or huntsman of the pack, to come on. The *piqueur* was not for it, however, but turned his horse, and, shouting, "Non, pardi, je ne saute pas les doubles fossés," rode off to try another place. Among animals hunted in France the red deer stag, of course, takes the place of honour. These animals are fairly plentiful in many parts of the country and yield great sport to the bigger packs. Wild fallow deer have much declined in numbers, and are now very scarce. Roe deer are yet plentiful, and are hunted by a considerable majority of the various *équipages*, or hunting establishments.

Roe are troublesome and twisting beasts of chase in cover, but, once forced from the woodlands, give excellent runs. Wild boar are abundant, and are much hunted by the various packs, large and small. They are formidable opponents, and many hounds are damaged by them at the death. English foxhounds are in high esteem for the *chasse à courre* with boar, their high courage, speed and strength serving them well in attacking this quarry. The *équipage* for boar-hunting is termed in French a *vautrait*.

Wolves are nothing like so plentiful as they used to be fifty or sixty years ago; but in the wilder forest regions—especially in the mountainous eastern and southern parts of the country—they are still fairly plentiful. They yield a great hunt, and few packs, indeed, even of first-rate English foxhounds, can hope to run down an old wolf, unless they find him with an overful stomach when gorged with prey. Even then the kill is by no means a certainty. Most of the wolf-hunting is done with the *louvard*, a young animal of from six months to a year; and with a good pack of

hounds and fair conditions, as a French writer rather confidently puts it, " elle se termine, presque toujours, par un hallali." The *hallali* is the music sounded on the great circular French hunting-horns by the hunt servants and the Master at the death. A *vieux loup* is one from four to five years; a *grand loup* is one of five years and upwards. These old beasts are rarely killed with a pack of hounds. One of the oldest institutions in France is the *lieutenant de louveterie* (wolf-hunting lieutenant), a title which it is still the ambition of most French country gentlemen to attain. This title carries with it the obligation to maintain, where necessary, a wolf-hunting train, or small pack of hounds. The title is largely ornamental nowadays; but the depredations, often very serious, of wild boar have still to be dealt with, and the attentions of the *lieutenant de louveterie* can still be demanded. There are scores of these *lieutenants* among the country denizens of France, and nearly all masters of hounds have the title.

Hares are, as they have been from the earliest times, still a very favourite quarry among French hunting men, especially those who cannot afford an expensive *équipage*. They are plentiful in most parts of France, and, as with us in England, yield great sport, and a chase of extraordinary and varied interest.

The fox has in France, as I have said, nothing like the popularity that it has in England as a beast of chase. Nevertheless it is growing in favour in some parts of the country, and a fair number of packs, especially the smaller ones, now devote themselves to it, often, as with a few hunts in our English West Country, alternately with hare, or occasionally with roe deer.

Among the largest packs of hounds in France is to be mentioned the well-known Pau Hunt, whose beginnings are said to date from the arrival of Wellington's triumphant Peninsular army at Orthez in 1814. These hounds have for many years hunted wild foxes, captured every week in the Pyrenees, and kept well and fit, to be turned out before hounds as and when required. These yield excellent chases, and a drag is also run once a fortnight. Hounds and foxes are both vanned to the meets. The pack numbers seventy couples, of which half are dogs, the other half bitches, which are hunted in separate packs. The establishment is run on English lines, with red coats for foxhunting and green for the drag. The Master, Mr F. H. Prince, is a well-known American sportsman, who has been at the head of this fine establishment since 1910, with an interval during the years of the war and its aftermath. He and Mrs Prince and the hunt servants ride first-rate horses. A huntsman and two whips look after hounds. The country may be described as a bank and brook one. There are plains and uplands, clothed in places with a good deal of short gorse. The Biarritz-Bayonne Hunt, dating from 1874, is of somewhat similar nature. Bag foxes are hunted, and a drag is also followed. The Master is M. Paul Lederlin, who succeeded the Comte Guy de Maille. The pack numbers thirty couples of hounds, bred from English and Haut-Poitou strains.

Among the largest packs of hounds now hunting in France is the Vautrait de Mimizan, a strong pack of seventy couples of English foxhounds, maintained by the Duke of Westminster at Mimizan, in the wild Landes country of Southern France (Gascony), for the

pursuit of boar. "The few hunters," says the *Annuaire de la Vénerie*, "who have followed the chase of the wild boar in this region are well aware of its often insurmountable difficulties." The country is vast, uninhabited, without roads, intersected by marshes, covered with great jungles of thorn-broom, where the wild creatures can play with hounds; these difficulties are increased by the intemperate winter season—short days, and often water covering the land in one immense lake. Nevertheless, the Duke of Westminster has enjoyed fine sport with the formidable *sanglier* in this wild country. As he is often away, his hunting days are irregular.[2]

Turning to the hunts which may be termed purely French, one comes to the famous *équipage* of the Duchesse d'Uzès, of Château de Bonnelles, Seine et Oise. This hunt was established in 1871. The Duchesse maintains a large pack of hounds, with kennels, at Celles-les-Bordes, and is herself *lieutenant de louveterie* for the *arrondissement* of Rambouillet. She hunts the stag, and her servants include a chief huntsman (*piqueux*), two mounted whippers-in (*valets de chiens à cheval*), and two others on foot. The *valets de chiens à pied* are mainly employed with the relays of hounds placed in different parts of the forest. Armand Jouannin, an old *piqueux*, still joins in the chase as honorary huntsman. The uniform is *rouge à la française*, collar and cuffs blue, blue breeches and waistcoat, and *galons de vénerie* (hunting-lace). Ladies having the hunt-button wear the same uniform, with a *lampion* of black plumes in the hat. The Duchesse is a most enthusiastic sportswoman. She is now one of the doyens of French hunting, and her following

includes not only her neighbours, but her children and grandchildren. The only other lady Master of French Hounds that I know of is the Marquise de la Chapelle-Crosville, of Château de la Faye, Cher, who has revived the Équipage de la Brosse, founded in 1860, and hunts roe deer in her neighbourhood.

One of the most important post-war hunts in France is that of M. André Bertin, of Castel des Bruyères, in the Department of Eure. This is a *vautrait*, devoted to the pursuit of boar only, and the pack, mainly English foxhounds, numbers sixty couples. With these M. Bertin hunts the forests of Evreux, Le Dreux, Senonches and Gisors. M. Bertin, if I remember aright, was a leading figure at Le Touquet Horse Show two or three years before the war. He is one of the most accomplished cross-country riders in France. He was admirably mounted at the Show in question, and his superb jumping was one of the features of the day. At this Horse Show three huntsmen in uniform, with their great French horns, blew all competitors on to and off the course. After the performance was over my wife and I chanced upon these *piqueux* at the adjacent buffet. I invited them to take refreshment, and we had some conversation on French hunting and its music. So soon as they discovered that we hunted in England they were delighted to exchange ideas. We had our bicycles with us, as we were just then at Montreuil exploring some of the old battlefields —Agincourt, Crécy, and so on. Presently, after bidding farewell to the jolly huntsmen, we rode off, and were almost overcome by the honour they did us in blowing a combined fanfare at our departure.

Horn-music, in mediæval and Tudor times, was in

A FRENCH DIANA

BEFORE THE WAR LADIES HUNTING WITH THE MORE IMPORTANT AND ARISTOCRATIC *equipages* WERE ATTIRED IN A COSTUME SOMEWHAT RECALLING THE LOUIS XV PERIOD THIS PICTURESQUE COSTUME IS NOT NOW SO OFTEN SEEN THOUGH IT MAY BE OCCASIONALLY NOTICED

England much more elaborate than it now is. The curved instrument of the Stuart and earlier periods was superseded for a short time by the long, straight, twenty-inch horn. This, in turn, was largely replaced by the unwieldy French horn, which came into vogue towards 1720 and remained with many hunts until about 1785. Thereafter the short straight horn of the present day came into general use. We are a practical race, and the many and various " horn measures " and flourishes of our ancestors were then cast aside for a few short and easily recognized calls. The French evidently prefer a more ornate and elaborate system, and the big circular horn enables them to indulge their fancy in this respect. But it must be remembered that they hunt for the most part in dense woodlands, where horn-music is often very necessary for the information of the field and hunt servants. Every considerable hunt has its own particular fanfare; and at the death the *hallali*, blown by several horns in unison, is quite a lengthy, and to an English sportsman rather a wearisome, business.

Another important *vautrait* is that of M. André Morel, of Château de la Pacaudière, Allier, who now hunts boar with a pack of English foxhounds (forty-seven and a half couples) in the forest of Tronçais, Allier. He is aided by English hunt servants. In 1914 M. Morel had the misfortune to lose his pack of hounds, which fell into German hands. At that time he was hunting the boar in the Ardennes country. M. Morel has hunted with foxhounds, staghounds and harriers in England, and his partiality for English hunt servants is certainly a compliment to this country. His hounds were obtained chiefly from the Belvoir, Badminton, Meynell,

Milton and Heythrop kennels. M. F. Darblay, with a strong pack of fifty couples—cross-bred English and French—hunts boar in Touraine (between Tours and Saumur), in the forest of Amboise, and in other large woodlands.

The Rallye Gascogne (Gascony Hunt), mastered by M. Christian Cruse, was before the war a *vautrait* of forty couples. The pack numbers some twenty couples, and the hunt, having abandoned boar-hunting, now follow roe deer from their kennels at Saint-Laurent-de-Médoc, in Gironde.

The name of d'Andigné is famous in French hunting annals, and several members of the family are still prominent in the chase in Sarthe, Vendée, Maine-et-Loire, and elsewhere. The Comte Henri d'Andigné, of Château de Resteau, Sarthe, is of the third generation of this family to Master a pack of hounds from Resteau. He is now Joint-Master, with Baron Roger and other gentlemen, of the Anjou-Sologne Équipage, which with thirty-five couples pursues stag and wild boar from kennels at Vouzeron, Cher. The hounds are of Anglo-Poitou and Anglo-Saintongeois blood. Another of this name, Comte Geoffroy d'Andigné, of Château de la Blanchaye, Maine et Loire, hunts with success red deer and roe, with a pack of thirty couples of Poitou hounds, crossed with English foxhound blood. Yet a third member of the family, Comte Olivier d'Andigné, is associated with his uncle, the Baron du Joncheray, in the Mastership of the Rallye Thiouzé. With this pack of thirty couples of Anglo-Poitou hounds they hunt red deer and roe in the forests of Loire-Inférieure, Maine et Loire, Deux Sèvres and Orne. It is worthy of note

that during the war Baron du Joncheray was able to preserve only fifteen hounds from his pack of thirty couples. This lamentable state of affairs was happening throughout France at that period. The Barons du Joncheray are as distinguished in the French hunting world as are the d'Andignés. Founded in 1845, the Rallye Thiouzé first hunted wolves and boar in Brittany and Anjou. They then turned their attention to boar and fox. In 1881 Baron Gabriel du Joncheray began to hunt roe and occasional stag, and in December 1910 he and his huntsman sounded their thousandth *hallali* (kill), a not inconsiderable feat, whether in France or Britain.

Comte A. de Falandre, of Château Falandre, Orne, maintains thirty-five couples of mixed French and English blood with which he pursues wild boar in various forests of his neighbouring country and shows good sport. M. Olympe Hériot, who hunts in the forests of Bord and Louviers (Eure) and Brotonne and Lyons (Seine-Inférieure), possesses an excellent pack of forty couples of Haut-Poitou *bâtards* (cross-bred with English). He hunts stag, and averages fifty head during the season.

The Duc d'Estissac, of Château de Combreux, Loiret, with a pack of cross-bred Saintongeois-Vendéen hounds and some English foxhounds, hunts boar and occasional stag in the forest of Orleans. M. Paul Lebaudy follows deer with thirty-five couples of Saintongeois hounds—a very fine and ancient race—in the forests of Fontainebleau, Vernon, Gisors and Lyons. The Marquis du Luart, of Château du Luart, Sarthe, whose family has maintained a hunting establishment for many generations, hunts deer in the forests of Vibraye, La Pierre, Loges and Senonches, with twenty-five couples of cross-bred

hounds, and takes from thirty-five to forty stags in the season.

The Messieurs Menier still maintain the family hunt founded in 1878, and, with a good pack of hounds and five hunt servants, pursue the stag in the forest of Villers-Cotterets. The Marquis de Pracontal, Master of the Rallye Morvan, associated with other titled French landowners, hunts a pack of twenty-five couples of first-rate Poitou-Saintongeois hounds in Nièvre and Saone-et-Loire.

The well-known Équipage de Souvilly, of the Olny-Roederer family, is still going strong. Formed in 1882, this hunt has taken up to the present time more than 2000 deer and 500 wild boar in the forests of Breteuil, Conches, Laigle, Compiègne, Montargis, etc. M. Léon Olny-Roederer, of Château de Lierru, Eure, is the present Master. He has fifty couples of cross-bred French and English hounds, and hunts stag mainly in Breteuil and Conches. His staff includes three mounted men and two *valets de chiens à pied.*

The Comte de Songeons, of Château de l'Hermite, Eure, comes of very ancient and historic hunting stock. Before 1774 the head of the family was *capitaine de la petite vénerie* to the kings of France, an office abolished at that time. The family pack was still carried on during the fury of the Revolution, and, with its owners, was spared by the peasants for the reason that the family were regarded as invaluable destroyers of wolves! Quite possibly they were good landlords also, a rare species in those days! The present Comte de Songeons maintains a pack of Normandy-Poitou hounds, with which he hunts in Eure and Compiègne.

The Équipage de Cheverny (Loir-et-Cher), of which the Comte de Vibraye is Master, consists of twenty-five couples of Anglo-Poitou hounds, which hunt red deer and occasional boar in Sologne, and elsewhere. This is a hunt dating from 1850, and has a large and aristocratic following. The hunt fanfare, *La Vibraye*, is a stirring and quite elaborate one. The Comte is a first-rate sportsman. Baron James H. de Rothschild masters an excellent *équipage* of thirty-five couples of Anglo-Poitou hounds which hunt stag in the forests of L'Isle Adam, Carnelle, Compiègne, and elsewhere, where they show good sport.

These instances—lack of space prevents my mentioning more—will, I think, convince the reader that hunting in France, despite many difficulties, is to-day being soundly re-established. In addition to the more considerable *équipages*, from which I have quoted examples, a fair number of lesser hunts are maintained. These number from ten to twenty couples of various types of hound.

A fair example of the lesser type of hunt is that of the Rallye Grenouillet, maintained by M. Emile Perrin, of Orange, Vaucluse, *lieutenant de louveterie*, who, with twelve couples of Porcelaine hounds, hunts hare and wild boar in the Department of Gard. These beautiful hounds, usually white-and-orange or white-and-fawn in hue, are descendants of one of the most ancient and interesting strains of hunting-hound in France. Another example is that of the Comte Horric de la Motte, of Château Lanmary, Dordogne, who, with twelve and a half couples of big, rough-coated Vendée hounds, hunts wild boar in Charente, Haute-Vienne, La Creuse, Corrèze, and other districts. Yet another is the Rallye Pierre, of

M. Pierre Guillais, who, with ten couples of rough-coated *briquets* (harriers), pursues fox and boar in Sarthe and Mayenne, and kills some thirty boars and thirty-five foxes per season. Surely an excellent performance!

Of the quite small hunts there are also a fair number. The French have, like ourselves, a very long and wonderfully interesting history of the *chasse à courre*, and many sportsmen living modestly in country districts are not to be denied. There are really some pathetic instances of this passion for the chase. M. Louis Hubert, of Charleville, Ardennes, *lieutenant de louveterie*, for example, hunts with a small *meute* of fox-terriers. His quarry is not mentioned, but I presume it includes *tous les animaux*. Our *Baily's Hunting Directory* does not include fox-terrier packs in its purview, though I have known one at least which hunted stoats and weasels in Ireland. M. Ernest Laferrère, of Hagetmau, Landes, also *lieutenant de louveterie*, is another Master of these small and reduced packs. He hunts with five couples of cross-bred hounds of his district and pursues hare and fox, with an occasional boar. Without horse or professional huntsman, this keen sportsman and the friends who accompany him do their best with the material they have. They are sadly hampered by the poaching that now takes place in their district. Five years before the war M. Laferrère and his pack killed each year 120 hares, 100 foxes, 10 wild boars, and as many badgers, as well as some martens and polecats. But *braconage* is destroying sport in this region, and M. Laferrère's little pack now accounts for only twenty-five hares and a dozen foxes in the season. From other indications one gathers that the *braconnier* is gaining ground in France since the

war. Deer are not so plentiful as they were, and in a good many instances the chase of roe and red deer has been abandoned for boar, and even fox. We trust that our French friends will make a strong effort to deal with this evil, and we understand that anti-poaching associations are already being set on foot.

The French still have a strong sentiment for the ornamental features of hunting, their memories evidently taking them back to the great days of the kings of France, who for centuries hunted with immense panoply and display. Ouvry and his tapestries have preserved for all time the many features of hunting the stag in the time of Louis XV. Instead of the simple scarlet and green of English hunting, French uniforms are found ranging through an amazing variety of colours. Blues of many shades, varied greens, light and dark greys, pearl-grey, scarlet, madder, chestnut, russet, dead-leaf colour (*feuille-morte*), amaranth, even yellow—as with our two Berkeley Hunts—are some of the many colours displayed, nearly all of them with collars and cuffs of another hue. The uniform of the Équipage Virelade (Marquis de Villeneuve) is white, with red collar and cuffs, breeches and waiscoat—surely an expensive outfit for dirty winter weather and the rough sport of hunting! Waistcoats often match the breeches, and the latter, usually of velvet or velveteen, are worn in all sorts of hues: blues, reds, green, madder, and others. Ladies often wear the "cocked" three-cornered hat of the Louis XV. period.

Hunt servants are decorated with *galon de vénerie*, a broad gold band being usually seen round the velvet cap. The hunt-button is worn by subscribers.

This is usually decorated with the head of a stag, wolf, boar, roe, or hare.

Many hunts have a device or motto on the button, as "Boutez en avant," "Par monts et vallons," "Quo vadis," "À nous St Hubert" are instances. "Oun ey passade," the Gascon *patois* for "Où est-il passé?" ("Where's she gone?"), is the motto of M. Grandin de l'Eprevier's hare-hunt. One curious custom in French hunting is that of addressing the huntsman and other hunt servants by nicknames or *noms de chasse*. These are actually printed in the *Annuaire* describing the hunt. "Jolibois," "La Rosée," "Pic Hardy," "Vol-au-Vent," "Daquet," "La Verdure," "La Feuille," "La Brisée" are examples.

French hunting, then, it may be said, is slowly recovering from the shocks and destruction of the Great War. It will be some years before it is anything like fully re-established, and it may be doubted if it will ever quite attain the strength and popularity of 1914, when some 320 packs were in the field. If 200 *équipages* are attained by 1935 French hunting folk will have done well.

There is considerable scarcity of hounds, especially of the ancient French strains, such as the Vendée, Blue Gascon, Saintongeois, Normandy, Ariègeois, Briquet d'Artois, Porcelaine, Persac, Pindray, Céris, and other rare breeds. Crossing with imported English hounds seems to be the chief remedy. Basset hounds are still very scarce. One remarkable fact is the tenacity with which the old French families, very many of them people of title, stick to the chase. They form nearly one half of the masters of hounds in France, and the numbers of

those subscribing to and following hounds are still more remarkable, if we remember that France has long been firmly established as a republic.

NOTES

[1] In Beckford's time, and for long after, the French word for "huntsman" was *piqueur*. It is still so spelt in French dictionaries, but modern French sportsmen always spell the word *piqueux*.

[2] For the last few seasons the Duke of Westminster has taken his hounds to Normandy for January and February, and has there hunted the forests of Eu, Eawy, Crécy, and neighbouring woods. They hunt again at Mimizan in March.

CHAPTER THREE

American Foxhunting

FOXHUNTING in North America has been a system of slow and steady growth. Virginia and others of the Southern States seem to have been the early home of the sport; and in Virginia especially the owners of plantations and estates were already hunting the fox after the English fashion as far back as the beginning of the eighteenth century. General George Washington kept hounds for many years, and was an enthusiastic sportsman, as may be understood when one remembers that his ancestors came from Northamptonshire, still one of the finest English hunting counties.

Washington rode out from Mount Vernon with his old-fashioned Virginian hounds, largely black-and-tan, in a blue coat, scarlet waistcoat, buckskin breeches, top-boots—he was always particular about the cut and fit of his boots—and a velvet cap, and no doubt enjoyed himself amazingly with his fellow planter-squires in the rough wildernesses over which they hunted. Washington was by no means the cold and strait-laced figure usually accepted on this side of the Atlantic. He enjoyed a good dinner and a bottle of wine, and was an enthusiastic, all-round sportsman. It is worthy of note that General Lafayette brought with him a number of French hounds as a present to "the Father of his Country." Among Washington's favourite hounds the names of Vulcan, Ringwood, Truelove, Musick and Sweetlips have come down to us.

Climatically, the Northern States are not so well suited for hunting as the Southern. Winters are often very hard, and snow and frost interfere considerably with the regular pursuit of foxes. In Canada conditions are still less favourable, yet the Montreal Hunt, which has many stanch supporters, manages to carry on for a short season before hard winter sets in. Mr Harold Hampson, an old Uppingham boy, Master of the Hunt, writes to me as follows: "Our season here lasts only about two months, when we are stopped for the rest of the winter by hard frost and snow; but, in spite of that, we have kept hunting going for over one hundred years, and in our short season we frequently have some very good days. There is, of course, a horrible lot of wire in the country; but our fences are for the most part stone walls and post-and-rails, and the post-and-rail fences have a good-sized ditch on one side."

In the Eastern United States also hard weather is much against hunting, and often after twenty degrees of frost the whole country is iron-bound. Yet, as a correspondent of *Horse and Hound* wrote recently, even under such conditions "the Essex Vale Hounds were able to push their fox along at quite a good pace; but for the riders the going was most difficult, not to say treacherous, for the ground had been so much cut up at the panelled jumps [1] when it was in its soft condition. It is extraordinary how the horses' legs are able to stand such concussion. Of course were the hunts to wait for the disappearance of frost and snow there would be little or no hunting in the Eastern States. Some try to be philosophers and make the best of things."

In New Jersey, where the Essex Vale hunt, deer are

still fairly plentiful. These hounds often run across them and trouble occurs. On 11th January 1928 no fewer than seven deer were encountered, and the day was spoilt completely. Hounds could not be stopped before they reached the big woods, and, owing to the absence of rides, they ran riot till late in the day. This last season seems to have been one of the most open in the States for some years. As with us, there was much rain, and the going was excessively heavy.

The red fox—our British fox—which was originally imported many generations since, is found almost everywhere in the United States, and yields far the best hunting to be found there. He is not the pampered and well-fed beast now too often found in England, but has to make out a scanty living, often by travelling over large tracts of wild and difficult country. He is, therefore, usually to be found in hard-running condition, a lean, wiry animal who yields long and interesting hunts, sometimes extending over several hours, before yielding his brush. For these reasons the number of red foxes killed by hunting in the States is far inferior to the big scores attained during the season with many British hunts. The Grafton Hunt, Massachusetts, Mr Harry Worcester Smith's former pack, holds the record for recognised packs in the States—fourteen during a season in Virginia. This seems a small score enough, if compared with English results, but then the conditions are entirely dissimilar.

In the Southern States the indigenous grey fox is found, and often hunted. This is an animal only about two-thirds the size of the red fox, and yields but poor sport compared with his cousin. His " run " has been

compared with that of the rabbit; he dodges much in covert, sneaking about and squatting; he is an adept tree-climber, and is often overrun in consequence. He is altogether a poor creature with which to amuse a pack of good hounds.

So little is known of modern American foxhunting in this country that I applied not long since to two well-known masters of hounds in the United States to give me their views upon the subject. These gentlemen are Mr Harry Worcester Smith, formerly Master of the Grafton Hounds, Lordvale, North Grafton, Massachusetts, and Mr Joseph B. Thomas, formerly Master of the Piedmont Hounds, Piedmont Valley, Virginia, and now hunting a pack of his own, all Virginian-bred hounds. Each of these masters of hounds has great experience, not only of hunting in his own country, but of the various breeds of English hounds, and of our methods of hunting over here; and their testimony and opinions are, therefore, entitled to much respect. Both are genuine sportsmen who are deeply interested in the chase and have a very full and remarkable knowledge of the whole English literature on the subject.

Mr Harry Worcester Smith has a long and distinguished career as Master of Hounds in America. He is a fine and bold horseman and distinguished himself so far back as 1900 by winning the Champion Steeple Chase of America (value, $10,000), with his horse, The Cad, defeating six professional jockeys and setting up a record for the course of three-and-a-half miles. He is an indefatigable worker, whether at sport or business, and despite the fact that he has laboured very hard at business, and has created a fortune by his own exertions, has yet

found time to achieve the position of one of the finest all-round sportsmen in America.

He has written a very lively and interesting book, *A Sporting Tour through Ireland, England, Wales, and France*, published by the State Company, Columbia, South Carolina, in 1925. In sending me an article by himself on American hunting, and very kindly giving me permission to quote from it, Mr Worcester Smith contrasts very pointedly the differences between the sport as pursued in the Northern and Southern States. He writes as follows: "The real foxhunters of America are the sportsmen below the Mason and Dixon line, who follow for the love of hunting and care nothing for jumping or pink coats. There are thousands of foxhounds all over the Southern States whose owners are continually taking their packs out to vie with each other; and so, by breeding only to the best, they get hard-running, true hounds with good cry. All the foxes are wild, there are no made covers. A few of the pink-coated foxhunters in the North turn out a fox on the quiet, and in Pennsylvania, when they run a good fox in, they dig him out and have a turn out the next day, and sometimes 150 hounds congregate, as it is easy in these days to telephone around.

"In the North are stone walls and rails and lots of wire. I gave up the Loudoun country in Leesburg, Virginia, because there were rolls of 'Page woven fence' on the platform of every country store. Every country we have has to be panelled [*i.e.* jumps arranged]. There are eight or ten drag hunts. As I knew it there are but two or three of the recognised masters who could give sport with their hounds in England or Ireland. It is more or less an honorary position, and the huntsmen are often good men

from the South, who are looking for what we term 'soft snaps' in the North.

"To hunt successfully you must get out at daybreak and follow the feeding trail. Later in the season a good Master, who knows where his foxes lie, can give sport at eleven o'clock, but it is generally hot and blowing by that time in September and October, and cold and blowing in November. It often freezes hard by the middle of November, and continues frozen with snow and slush and every variety of mixture until the first of April. Now and then we get what we call an open winter.

"Over here foxhunting with recognized Northern packs is an acquired taste. . . . Down South you strike some real hunters and grand sport. Many run their hounds only at night (days are too hot) and will go off on camp hunts for a week or ten days at a time. Some of these foxhunters travel from state to state, taking their hounds with them, and if they strike a hound that can lead theirs they will buy him or breed to him."

Again, in his article on "The American Foxhound," published some years since, Mr Worcester Smith says: "Fully 90 per cent. of the sportsmen in the States do not ride after their hounds. For the greater part of the country there is vast woodlands and mountains, almost inaccessible except on foot, and deep swamps where riding is impossible.

"There are no artificial coverts and no stopping of earths, and the quarry is a veritable wild animal. In the North Atlantic Coast States there are a few hunt clubs who hunt in the orthodox English fashion; but the foxhunters who have made the foxhound of America what he is still hunt and will always hunt in the Southern way.

"No packs are kept in the south and west for glory or fashion, except the glory of having the best hounds. Very few are kennelled, but allowed their freedom month in and month out; no hunt servants are employed, and there are no new masters coming in to turn everything topsy-turvy every few seasons.

"Like the Arab's horse, the planter's hounds become members of his family, and oft-times the purchase of one would be almost as difficult as to try to buy one of the children.

"There being no regular fixtures the hounds are not often hunted on impossible days, but with the wind from the right quarter the telephone is kept busy the night before, and a common meeting-place arranged.

"Then, with an early breakfast and a blow on the horn, the hounds are gathered together and follow their owners to the meet. Riding along quietly towards covert the hounds are allowed to find their own way into the woodlands, swamps, or on to the mountain, and seek out and start their quarry. As the cry of every hound in the pack is known to some of the different hunters, the work of each hound and their position in the race throughout the day is followed by the ear of the hunters rather than by the eye, so that good 'cry' is one of the great essentials.

"The riders, by a perfect knowledge of the country, are able to cut in now and then, or, by dividing up into parties, keep within hearing of the flying pack.

"If they are unable to keep up and it is cold they wait beside a fire, knowing full well that the pack will either bring the fox back or kill or den him before the day is over; and if they kill, they will get the story of the chase

within a day or two from the different farmers and labourers, all of whom are intensely interested in the sport, and the names of the hounds that are leading at this place and that place and possibly those that are up at the death.

"This method of hunting is easily seen to bring out in the hounds that wonderful sense of 'self-casting,' for they are compelled to be entirely independent, with no huntsman to aid them.

"There are many hunters who hunt only at night, taking advantage of the better scent, as the hot sun in the States soon dries up the dew or dampness of the night before. Then again, there is less wind after dusk, the fox is afoot and the trail more easily found, and also there is less chance of the 'red' being headed, as stock is quiet, and no one driving on the roads.

"This night-hunting is hard, desperate work for man and hounds, and the faces of the latter often show severe cuts from wire fence or thorn as they race headlong in the darkness hour after hour.

"By breeding only from those hounds that are good starters, good hunters, hard drivers and game to the core, night or day, and as they come back over the mountain in the afternoon under all circumstances are in the lead, or near it, the Southern foxhunters have in the last 150 years evolved a type which, for years, I have termed the natural type."

Mr Joseph B. Thomas, formerly Master of the Piedmont Hounds, Virginia, and the Overhill, North Carolina, now hunting a pack of his own in Virginia, with whom I discussed English hounds a few years back, writes me:

"You will perhaps remember that I had two objectives

for searching among English hounds for a possible outcross. My idea was to put more colour in my pack of Old Virginia foxhounds and perhaps give them a little more stoutness and thickness of coat, but without losing their wonderful nose, cry and pace. I searched unavailingly for just what I wanted. I compromised finally by purchasing a few hounds from Sir Edward Curre, at Chepstow, their cry being excellent and their colour light. This cross, tried both ways, was unsuccessful so far as my requirements were concerned. In the development of my pack in the six years that have elapsed I have rather come to the conclusion that breeding for colour is foolish, where hunting qualities are all-essential; and I have been able to improve my hounds within the strain (American) so much that the other points I required have been gained without recourse to outside blood."

Mr Thomas has been kind enough to allow me to quote from the MS. of a work on hounds and hunting, which he published in 1928.[2] He tells me that the natural colours of the Old Virginia hound are black-and-tan, red, infrequently fawn, and occasionally white. He continues: "The number of organised hunt clubs and field trials in the United States amounts to 155; but though in Pennsylvania alone there are twelve recognised hunts, New York following with ten, and Viriginia with eight, the greater number of hounds are owned by individual farmers or hunters. They are valued for their hunting qualities and voice, little heed being given to colour or shape, and they vary in different parts of the country very materially in characteristics, while, their ancestry being extremely mixed, they are not easy to breed true

MR JOSEPH B THOMAS (CENTRE) AND HIS OLD VIRGINIA HOUNDS

MR THOMAS, WHO HAS MASTERED MORE THAN ONE PACK OF HOUNDS IN THE UNITED STATES, IS KEENLY INTERESTED IN EVERY PHASE OF FOXHUNTING WHETHER IN AMERICA OR IN EUROPE HIS BOOK, "HOUNDS AND HUNTING THROUGH THE AGES," IS LIKELY TO TAKE ITS PLACE AS A CLASSIC OF THE CHASE

to type. However, they can hunt their game day in and day out, winter or summer, as they are adapted to the scenting peculiarities of this continent in a way no other hounds are.

"Foxhunting in America is divided into three categories: the farmer-sportsman of the North hunts with a single, slow, deep-voiced hound, his object being to shoot the fox in his runway. Foxes in the wooded, hilly north country have very definite crossing points which remain unchanged for generations.

"The Kentucky, Missouri, Virginia and Tennessee farmer-hunters, as well as those of numerous other states, own hounds which they hunt in small packs, meeting by appointment, often on foot. In warm weather they meet on moonlight nights. Their pleasure is found in the racing of their hounds, which they follow largely by ear; hence their great regard for good cry, coupled with speed. From this class of hunters have sprung the numerous field trial associations, in which individual ability is stressed.

"The third and much less numerous class of advocates of foxhunting ride to packs of hounds in the orthodox English manner.

"Where riding to hounds is concerned, the riding is much rougher, more wooded and hilly than that generally found in England, and necessarily makes greater demands upon both hounds and huntsman. During the hundred years which have elapsed since the famous packs of Hugo Meynell and Squire Osbaldeston were in their prime, the English foxhound has very materially changed—certainly in colour and conformation, unquestionably in cry and nose. The things that interest

a typical Virginia hound-owner to-day are precisely nose and cry.

"The best of nose, initiative, and determination without end is an absolute *sine qua non* in an American hound; and as for cry, on account of woodlands and hills, hounds without the best of cry would soon be lost to followers.

"Englishmen can hardly realise the conditions of dryness and rough going that American hounds have to hunt under. The fashionable modern Peterborough show type of hound is practically useless in America, largely owing to its excessive weight of bone, its inefficient, artificial feet, and its lack of nose and cry. The two things talked about most frequently in English kennels are 'bone and straightness,' and, out hunting, 'scent is bad to-day.' Excessive bone and *soi-disant* straightness may be all right on the flags at Peterborough, but they do not help much when the scent is bad, for surely no good hound is faster than his nose.

"It is rather hard for an American, who admires very much the appearance of the many packs he has seen in the field in England, to account for their inefficiency, unless it be that in breeding for appearance their working qualities have been overlooked to a point where the hound has gone backward. Unquestionably, in England racehorses are bred to win, regardless of colour or superficial show-riding qualities, and they continue to lead the world; but where the modern English foxhound is concerned, his lack of cry, not to mention other physical deteriorations, presumably brought about by breeding to show standards, would, if he depended on his own efforts, make it almost impossible for him to know which way the American hound went.

"Personally, I believe that the English foxhound has gone back materially in his work, and my contention is based on the following observations. To my mind the most efficient living animal of his species to hunt a fox is the Old Virginia foxhound. These hounds are, in my sincere belief, very similar to the best English hounds of the early nineteenth century. The strains of such hounds, from which my own pack is descended, have been owned from father to son by numerous generations of Virginia landowners. They have never been known by a name more definite or more fashionable than 'the old family' of hounds. I believe, though I have never been able to prove it on paper, that these marvellous Virginia hounds, which have extraordinary nose, cry, drive, stamina and brains, are the descendants of hounds imported from the fashionable English packs of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

"The *ante-bellum* Virginia landed gentry were descended from the class of Englishmen who were keenest on riding to hounds, and who always bred and owned the best of hounds and horses. In history and fiction there is constant reference to the hunting proclivities of the Virginians, and among other little-known proofs are entries in the diary of George Washington regarding his hounds.

"Contemporary portraits, by such men as R. B. Davis, James Pollard, Alken, Wolstenholme, Ferneley, and J. F. Herring, depicting the English hound of the early nineteenth century, show an animal very similar in bone, conformation and colour to the best Old Virginia foxhound of the present time.

"If the Virginia foxhound of to-day is like the English

hound of a hundred years ago, the old English packs must have been very wonderful in their work, because the former have noses that can work the line of a fox over miles of burned-over country, or through swamps where foxes are jumping from tussock to tussock; determination to hunt in heat or cold (I have known a pack to kill a fox after three and a half hours, with the thermometer between seventy and eighty degrees). They have what we call ' fox-sense,' or ' hunting brains,' that never permits them to heel a line, or make a mistake where a grey fox has foiled his own line several times in a few minutes in thick swamp or covert; and accuracy, whereby they will not overrun five yards, although hunting at mad speed down a woodland ride or sandy road.

" It is only common sense to say that no good hound is faster than his nose, but, under reasonably good conditions, it needs the best of thoroughbred horses to stay with these hounds. As to their cry, there is only one pack in Britain that I have ever heard, to begin to compare with them, and that is Sir Edward Curre's, in Monmouthshire, which is, of course, part Welsh. This sort of hound is what I believe the old English foxhound was before fashion spoilt him for work under difficult American conditions."

These strictures are, perhaps, too severe, and one must make due allowance for the belief of the American sportsman in the hounds of his own country, especially in the Old Virginia hound. But English hounds *have* suffered by shows and by the fashions and prejudices of breeders, and, speaking generally, the English hound of the present day, while undeniably handsome to look at,

has lost some of his former excellence in nose, cry and independence, and general hunting quality.

My third authority for the conditions of modern American foxhunting is that excellent and very amusing book, *Radnor Reminiscences: A Foxhunting Journal*, by J. Stanley Reeve (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. The University Press, Cambridge, U.S.A.), a well-known hunting man in Pennsylvania. In this cheery illustrated volume Mr Reeve gives an account of sport with the Radnor hounds and other packs in Pennsylvania between 1912 and 1921, and I do not think a better picture of hunting in the Northern States can be found.

Mr Reeve gives—for the most part from his hunting journal—particulars of sport with the Radnor hounds, a pack formed in 1886, and which hunts three days a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday). This is described as a rolling country, principally fenced with post-and-rails, and yielding generally good galloping. But the author hunted occasionally also with the Rose Tree, Brandy Wine, Cambridge, and Messrs Kirk's and Serrill's packs in the same state. There seems to be a good deal of wire in places, and there are many references to hunting when the ground was hard frozen and occasionally covered with snow. American sportsmen evidently hunt under conditions in which English packs would not be allowed to go out. There is manifestly a good deal of grief in such hunting, and casualties appear to be numerous. Fields are not so large as with the better-known English hunts, and from fifty to seventy-five sportsmen and women may be considered as good fields with the Radnor hounds.

Ladies turn out on first-rate horses and look fully as smart as the most up-to-date Dianas of the English chase. They ride very hard and, from Mr Reeve's accounts, often take tosses and misadventures, which they accept with great courage and complete equanimity.

One gathers that the meets of the various hunts are not always arranged, as they are in England, so as to avoid jostling, and the riders seem rather too often to be in one another's way. Joint hunts of two and even three packs are mentioned, and the "cry" on such occasions is glorious, for the reason that American hounds have in these days more "tongue" than have their English cousins.

Foxes in Pennsylvania seem to be fairly plentiful, but they are not so often handled as in this country. From an abstract which I have made of fifty-seven runs set forth in rather more than the first half of Mr Reeve's book, I find that 9 foxes were killed, including 1 encumbered by a trap, and 4 cubs; 33 were run to ground and 26 more were lost and given up. Probably the Pennsylvania country is not even so well stopped as with us in England at the present day. Some extracts from this lively book will give English readers an excellent idea of American foxhunting.

One of the best runs of which I find mention was on 21st November 1912, when, after a joint meet of the Radnor and Rose Tree hounds, they made a fifteen-mile point, having run their fox "quite twenty-five miles before pulling him down." There were 16 up out of a field of 75, and Mrs Devereux, whose picture appears in one of the illustrations, was given the brush. Hunt races and balls are dealt with here and there, and of the latter

the author thus writes: "One does not quite know whether one ought to describe a hunt ball as the meeting-place of young widows in ash cloth and sashes, bold, bad men and foxhunters, who have been described as the unspeakable pursuers of the uneatable, or whether as the best dance in the world, provided one has wined and dined sufficiently beforehand."

American foxhunters, in truth, seem to be convivial souls. There is frequent mention of the famous Radnor yellow port and other refreshment. The Radnor and Rose Tree hunts having had serious misunderstanding about their lower country on various occasions, a friendly conference between the two masters took place. Yet the old trouble happened again. On 20th January 1917 there was a joint-hunt of the two packs—"a love-feast"—when two nice runs ensued, both to ground. After this the combined field adjourned to a lunch given by the Rose Tree Hunt, at 2 P.M. Later on the kennel doors were thrown open and the whole Rose Tree pack came out with a roar. They picked up the line with a burst of music that could be heard for miles, ran it half-way round, and then went off down country all on their own, but evidently on the line of another fox, and finally disappeared over the hilltops, undoubtedly having the time of their young lives.

This was a hunting "love-feast" indeed; I cannot recall anything of the kind in English hunting annals, but perhaps in Ireland, in the wild old days, some such happening may have occurred. I can remember in the days before the war, after the Hailsham Harriers' Puppy Show, and lunch at his residence at Priesthaus, near Pevensey, the Master, the late Alexander Campbell,

that great sportsman and character, issuing forth with forty-two couples of his old-fashioned Southern Harriers for an afternoon hunt. He had behind him a great train of farmers, their wives and daughters, sportsmen, visitors — men and women — and others. We found quickly, and the pack went off with much the same kind of " roar " the Rose Tree Hounds gave vent to on the memorable occasion just mentioned.

These extracts from Mr J. Stanley Reeve's interesting and entertaining book will, I think, give English readers some idea of sport in the hunting fields of Pennsylvania.

NOTES

[1] Jumps specially prepared to admit the passage of sportsmen in a wired-up country.

[2] *Hounds and Hunting through the Ages.*

CHAPTER FOUR

A Great West Country Sportsman

MAJOR MORLAND GREIG, Master of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, fell in Gallipoli, in October 1915. He had not long been there with his regiment, the Royal North Devon Hussars, one of the smartest yeomanry corps in the kingdom, which had been called up for service on the outbreak of the war, and had for a long time been on duty in the Eastern Counties. Morland Greig was one of the best and most typical of English sportsmen, and a universal favourite in the West Country, especially in the Exmoor region, where by his real kindness of heart and genial and manly qualities he had rendered himself universally popular. A few reminiscences of this great and lamented sportsman are, I think, worth putting on record.

In his younger days, Morland Greig was for some time ranching in the Western States of America, where he went through some pretty rough experiences. There, undoubtedly, he acquired that strong yet easy seat and thorough mastery of his horse which always distinguished him. Returning to England, he lived for some years in Kent, where he hunted with several packs of hounds, including the West Kent, Tickham, East Kent, the Mid Kent Staghounds and the Romney Marsh Harriers. Rather more than thirty-five years ago he found his way to the Exmoor country, where he became at once smitten with the chase of the wild red deer and the manifold

delights of life in one of the remotest, most primitive, and most beautiful parts of Britain. Looking around, he was presently able to find and purchase an old-fashioned house at Exford, which had been at one time or another used as a hunting-box by Mr Fenwick Bissett and Lord Ebrington (now Earl Fortescue) during their tenure of the Mastership of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds. This house, known as Edgcott, he enlarged and improved greatly, and having acquired a small estate adjoining, he built excellent stables, sufficient for twenty-five horses, and later on some capital kennels, when he undertook the Mastership of the Quarme Harriers. To this comfortable home, then, Major Greig migrated with his family in or about the year 1895. Those who have experienced the pleasure and the hospitality of this typical moorland home—and their name is legion—can testify to the delights of life in this wild region. Exford, a tiny village, on the infant Exe, a thousand feet up on Exmoor, lies twelve miles from the nearest station, Dulverton. Here are situate the kennels of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds; and here, in a glorious country, the hunting man can enjoy sport upon every day of the week with half-a-dozen neighbouring packs of hounds—to wit, the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, the Exmoor, Dulverton and West Somerset Foxhounds, and the Quarme and the Minehead Harriers.

Morland Greig quickly proved himself an acceptable addition to the Exmoor countryside. The keenest of sportsmen, having a wonderful eye and memory for a wild and rough terrain, he was a bold horseman to whom fear was absolutely unknown. No man, it can safely be said, ever enjoyed the delights of Exmoor stag- and

hind-hunting more than Major Greig, and none was more fitted by nature to appreciate the varied charms of life in that glorious country. He was a capital game shot, and in his earlier days on the moor, in company with his friend, Mr Philip Everard, so many years Secretary of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, made some extraordinarily good bags of black game, as well as of wildfowl, snipe and woodcock. He was in great demand also at the autumn pheasant-shoots in the neighbouring country.

Major Greig and his family soon found their way into the hearts of their neighbours. He became a county magistrate, a keen officer of the North Devon Hussars, a corps in which he showed his capacity for hard work and soldiering; and, in course of time, Deputy Master of the Staghounds, which under the able Mastership of Mr R. A. Sanders (now Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Bayford) had attained a pitch of unexampled prosperity. Lord Bayford, it may be noted, was in command of the North Devon Hussars, and it is remarkable that at the time of Major Greig's lamented death in Gallipoli no fewer than three masters or ex-masters of these hounds were at the Front with the regiment.

In 1900 Major Greig took over the Quarme Harriers, which had been established in the year 1860 by Mr W. L. Chorley of Quarme, the pack having been purchased by that gentleman on the death of Captain John Guy Evered, of Stone Lodge, Exton, who had had them for many years. Thesewere all of the pure, light-coloured, old-fashioned Devonshire strain, of which I have written fully in another book. Major Greig, as I have said, built kennels near his home to accommodate his pack,

and for twelve seasons showed brilliant sport with them. He took immense pains with his breeding, greatly improved the pack and, on his taking over the Mastership of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds in 1912, handed on to Mr E. Pemberton Barnes, his successor, a very perfect and killing "cry" of harriers. Fond as he was of stag-hunting, he was wonderfully proud of his Quarme Harriers, and loved to see them working and hunting unaided over the wild moorlands. Hares are stout on Exmoor, but these speedy and well-nosed hounds were not to be denied, and they killed usually some fifty brace of hares each season. I have hunted with many packs of harriers, beagles and bassets, but I never saw hare-hunting in greater perfection than with the Quarme, with which, under Morland Greig and Pemberton Barnes, I have witnessed some extraordinarily good sport. It was a pleasant sight to see Major Greig and his family issue forth on a fine winter's morning for a day with these charming light-coloured hounds. Besides the Master and his trusty kennel huntsman and whip, Walter Sanders, there would be, when the boys were home from school, four sons out, including the youngest, a little lad of seven or eight, mounted on that famous pony, Mayfly. Miss Greig, an accomplished horsewoman and a first-rate whip, was of course always of the party, and Mrs Greig often drove out with a friend to see the fun. Of these four sons, it may be remarked, one during the war was serving in the navy, two others had commissions, and were with their regiments, while the youngest was still at school. Miss Greig was nursing in Flanders. Here, indeed, with the father giving his life for his country, is a shining example of the patriotism of the

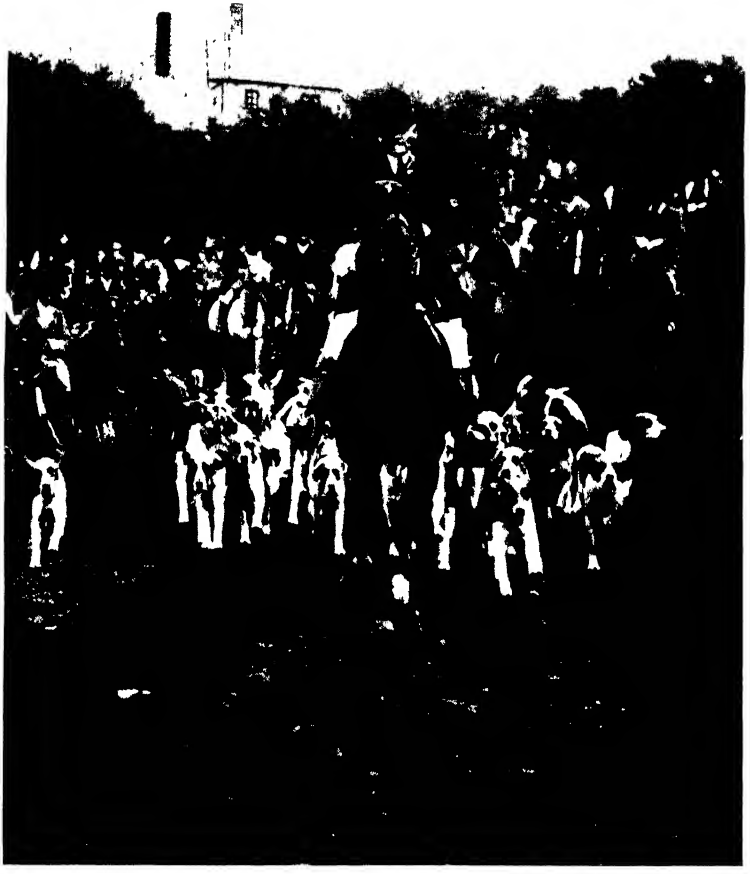
English country gentleman and sportsman, a class which, surely, can never again be cavilled at while the history of the Great War is remembered.

I first met Morland Greig in the autumn of 1905, when I was staying for seven weeks stag- and hind-hunting at Larkbarrow—a lonely farmhouse, now used as a hunting-box, lying in the heart of Exmoor, between Porlock and Exford. Larkbarrow was lent to me by my friend, Mr W. E. Arthur, a well-known Devonshire hunting man who then rented it, and a truly delightful residence it was for those who, like myself and my family, are fond of wild life. From one's open window in the morning one could hear black-cock calling from some heathy hillock close by; red deer were often to be seen near the place, snipe and wild duck were occasionally flushed within a hundred yards of the house, and Nature on a golden October morning was at her best and bravest. Major and Mrs Greig were our nearest neighbours, and it was at this time that we got to know and appreciate their real kindness of heart. If we wanted anything—a horse, a pony, a bridle or saddle, or straw, or anything in fact that hunting folk are likely to be in need of in the inaccessible wilds of Exmoor—it was forthcoming with never-failing promptitude. The sight of Morland Greig's cheery face in itself was always a presage of pleasant sport, or a visit. As an Exmoor shepherd, a sober Scotsman, once said to me: "Aye, there's a gude gentleman indeed! You can see his smile half-a-mile away, as he comes over the hill."

Greig became Master of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds in 1912, and carried on till the outbreak of war in 1914. Incessant practice had by this time made

him an adept in every phase of the wild and rough sport of red-deer hunting on Exmoor. Roping the stag, at the bay, is a difficult and delicate business, and only a very few, even of the *habitués* of Exmoor, know how to perform it properly. Morland Greig was an adept at the game, and Ernest Bawden, the then whipper-in, Mr Froude Hancock, Sir Robert Sanders, so long Master of the Staghounds, a few moorland farmers, and of course Sidney Tucker, the huntsman, were all first-rate hands at the business. It would appear easy enough to throw a noosed cord over the stag's antlers, pull it taut and get the beast's head down when his attention is taken up by the baying pack; but as a matter of practice it is not by any means so simple. The stag's head is constantly in motion, repelling hounds, and he has a pretty clear notion of the meaning of the cord being cast over his head, and shifts his antlers accordingly. Neither is the operation without danger. On one occasion Major Greig entered a deep pool of water in a stream where a stag was set up, and where the animal was so placed that he could not be approached from flank or rear. As he waded in towards the stag's side, the infuriated beast, suddenly turning upon him, would inevitably have transfixed him if Mr Froude Hancock, one of the greatest and most devoted stag-hunters in the West of England, had not pluckily rushed into the water to his friend's assistance. That rush turned the deer and undoubtedly saved Major Greig from severe injury.

Morland Greig, next to the huntsman and whipper-in, for a score of years before his death, undoubtedly saw more of stag- and hind-hunting on Exmoor than any other person. He lived on the spot and seldom missed



THE LATE MAJOR MORLAND GREIG AND THE DEVON AND SOMERSET STAGHOUNDS

MAJOR MORLAND GREIG, AT ONE TIME MASTER OF THE QUARME HARRIERS AND LATER OF THE DEVON AND SOMERSET STAGHOUNDS, WAS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR FIGURES ON EXMOOR. HE DIED IN GALLIPOLI, WHILE SERVING WITH THE ROYAL NORTH DEVON HUSSARS.

a day, and during the hind-hunting season, as Deputy Master, when Mr R. A. Sanders—or his successor—was away, he was always at the head of affairs. No man had, or has, a more intimate knowledge of Exmoor hunting than Mr Sanders, one of the greatest and most successful masters that the country has ever seen; but Morland Greig, from his great experience and his innate capacity for hunting, knowledge of the run of a deer, and general woodcraft, yielded to none but him, or to Sidney Tucker, Ernest Bawden, and Fred Goss, the harbourer. He loved the winter and hind-hunting, with all their hardships and exposure; and it was a relief to him when the summer crowd of stag-hunting visitors had departed, and the small fields of late autumn and winter had succeeded them. For hind-hunting, a field of from a score to forty—often nearer the lesser number—is the usual thing. Hinds give magnificent runs, and I have seen some glorious hunts with them in company with Morland Greig. I remember one especially fine run with an extraordinarily good hind in the winter of 1906, when staying with him at Exford. We had two hours and five minutes from Mr Snowe's deer park, neare Oare; most of it over Brendon Common and the North Forest, and finally brought our hind back to Badgworthy Water and killed in that classic stream. It was a very fast hunt, and we had traversed some twenty-five miles of rough country. I luckily got a second horse at Larkbarrow in the first hour of the hunt; but Greig refused the opportunity, and as the hind never gave him another chance he had some ado, even although on a good hunter, to get to the end of the chase. I put my knee out—the remains of an old football accident—

while leading my horse down a very steep and rough combe side; but Greig and Mr Pemberton Barnes helped me on my horse again, and I was lucky enough to see the deer taken. Hind-hunting meets take place at ten o'clock, owing to the short winter days. Hounds and hunters have often to travel ten or twelve miles to the fixture, go through a long and severe hunt or two, and hack back perhaps another ten or fifteen miles. All this means very often that the hunt servants and field travel from forty to sixty miles in their day's sport; and it is to be remembered that the high uplands of Exmoor, which rise from 1500 to 1700 feet above sea-level, are very exposed, and visited during winter by much rough weather, including dense white sea-fogs, which render hunting very difficult and uncertain. That Morland Greig, during twenty seasons, endured these hardships and this life of exposure, hunting four days a week with stag in autumn and three days with hind in winter, in addition to a couple of days a week with his beloved harriers, and thoroughly enjoyed every day of his life, is clear enough proof that he was a born sportsman, possessed of an iron frame and a fine constitution.

One of the longest and hardest days that I suppose he ever experienced was during the autumn of 1913, when he was Master of the Staghounds. On the morning of the 8th of October, after the annual Venison Feast to the farmers and occupiers of the Hunt, held at Dulverton, the meet was at the ancient town itself, as is the custom. A galloping four-year-old stag was found in Warcleave, just outside Dulverton, and at 12.30 P.M. the pack was laid on at Hollam. This splendid stag led the field, during

the great hunt that ensued, over more than twenty-eight miles of country, and was not taken until 5.30 P.M. at Dene Cross, within four miles of Taunton. At one time the stag got a long way ahead—as much as two hours at one period—but hounds, after having almost lost him, stuck to the line, fresh-found him at Fitzhead Court, and then pushed their quarry at such a pace over the vale of Taunton Dene that they fairly "blew him up in the open"—as Will Goodall used to express it—at Dene Cross, at 5.30 P.M. That night, after welcome refreshment at Watts House, the residence of Colonel Boles, M.P., Master of the West Somerset Foxhounds, Major Greig, his daughter, and the hunt servants did not reach home and kennels at Exford until 11.15 P.M., after having ridden more than seventy miles of country. It is remarkable that Miss Greig, a splendid horsewoman, accomplished this feat on a single horse.

I had some very enjoyable hind-hunting with Morland Greig during the winters of 1912 and 1913, when staying with him at Exford. We hunted five days a week, with hind, fox and hare, and I have never had a better time. One incident, bearing upon the late war, is perhaps worth recalling. At the end of November 1913, when I was at Edgcott, a young German lieutenant of hussars turned up with a horse or two at one of the Exford hotels and had a day's hunting. Major Greig received him with his usual kindly hospitality, invited him to dinner, and, learning that some of his kit had not turned up (Lieutenant Schultz represented himself as arriving from some other hunting country, I think Gloucestershire), provided him with breeches and other necessary articles. We had a most cheery dinner together at

Edgcott on the night of 28th November, and Lieutenant Schultz was very agreeable and proved that he could speak excellent English. Next morning we rode out to the meet at Driver Cot, eleven miles away. Here there was dense fog, but, riding across the moor to Hoar Oak and Farley Water, we emerged suddenly into brilliant sunshine and a very high temperature. The rolling clouds of mist as they cleared away suddenly revealed the glorious landscape in front of us, with the Severn Sea and the hills of Wales in the distance—a magnificent spectacle. On Brendon Common three hinds were seen to be before us, and we ran them, with the tufters, to Badgworthy Wood, whence they soon emerged, coming straight for us, with the leading tufters close behind. They came right past us, and with Sidney Tucker's soul-stirring screams, as he cheered his hounds on, it was a splendid moment. Then, doubling his horn, away we went very fast on a hot scent over the wildest part of the moor. From that moment Lieutenant Schultz disappeared from the scene and was lost to us all. What became of him I never could find out.[1] He left Exford next day or the following one. Singling out one of these three hinds we had a great hunt of an hour and ten minutes, during the latter part of which the pack, kennelled at Tom's Hill, were laid on, and added to the pressure of the tufters' pursuit. We finally took her in Badgworthy Water, where so many hundreds of deer have their end. Another of these hinds was killed later on in the day.

The last hunt but one I had with Greig was on the 3rd of December in this same year, 1913. We rode with the pack to the meet at Hawkcombe Head—a very

rough morning, with driving showers and a tearing wind which lasted all day. A very small meet, only some fifteen turning up. We found a hind in Yearnor Moor plantations, and had a good hunt by Lillycombe, Hookway, Pittcombe Head and Whitstones; and after more than an hour's run the tufters killed her at Weir Water. We saw several good stags, some of which ran close to us. In the hind-hunting season, stags seem to understand that they are not in the day's programme of events, and do not distress themselves unduly. Found another hind, and pushed her from Whitstones over some open common and then back to the plantations, where other deer caused diversion for a time. However, Sidney picked up his run hind again, and finally drove her, after much woodland hunting, to the Parks and Worthy Wood, above Porlock. At 3.30 P.M. I was at the bottom of the wood by the stream which runs out at Porlock Weir, hounds being higher up. I noticed a tourist gazing intently at something in front of him, and, leading my horse up, saw our hunted hind wading down the water. I rode up to Greig, who was not far away, and he at once blew his horn, and got Sidney and the pack to the spot. They hunted down the water, and twenty minutes later took a very beaten hind by Captain Forte's house, near Porlock Weir. This was a long and difficult hunt of nearly three hours, most of it in woodland with other deer about, to make matters troublesome.

After refreshment at the inn at Porlock Weir we rode home in the growing dusk by Ashley Combe, and, arrived at the top, descended to Weir Water, where we had left the first hind killed by the tufters in the morning. This hind had been rather haunched and torn, and it was

determined, for once in a way, to let the pack eat her. The Devon and Somerset hounds seldom taste blood, as do foxhounds, but very occasionally they are allowed to do so. When Sidney gave the word there was a tremendous scramble as they fought for the flesh, and it was a most weird scene in this wild valley in the growing darkness. In four or five minutes the hind was completely demolished, all save the skin, which, strangely enough, was almost intact, with every scrap of flesh and bone clean gone. The hide of a deer is proverbially tough, but I never could have believed, unless I had witnessed it, that it could thus stand the racket of a pack of big, hungry hounds all fiercely tearing at it.

It was now dark, and with Sidney Tucker leading us we made our way over rough moorland country to the Exford road, near Chettisford Water, and presently reached the kennels and Greig's comfortable house. We had been in the saddle more than nine hours, and enjoyed the more the tea, hot baths, and an excellent dinner, concluded with some very fine old port.

The very last time I had the pleasure of a hunt with Morland Greig was during the spring stag-hunting season of 1914, on 8th April, when, from the fixture at Crowcombe Heathfield, under the Quantocks, we had the extraordinarily long and brilliant run which I have described in another place.[2] This was one of the finest hunts I ever saw with the Devon and Somerset, and I was very proud to receive from the Master a "slot" of this splendid stag, which I treasure greatly among my various trophies. Little did I think, as I said good-bye to Morland Greig on that memorable afternoon, at beautiful Winsford village, that I should never again

have the pleasure of a hunt with that gallant sportsman and best and cheeriest of companions. Major Greig's hunting experiences with the Devon and Somerset were, however, so numerous and so varied during his career of twenty years in the Exmoor country that he could recall many other equally great runs with wild red deer. He was a most untiring horseman, who always rode forward in every hunt, and there were very few chases during these two decades in which he had not taken a prominent part.

He was an absolutely fearless sportsman, as he was a soldier. During one of the last stag-hunts of the autumn of 1913 the hunted beast went down to the edge of the beetling cliff at Hurlstone Point, above Porlock Bay, and was there closed with by the pack, which got him down on the very edge of the precipice. Morland Greig was first up, and to his dismay saw the stag already partly over the edge, with the clamouring hounds all about him. In another minute it seemed that not only the stag but many of the best hounds in the pack would be over the precipice and dashed to pieces on the rocks below. Major Greig's resolution was instantly taken. Getting a coastguard to come to his assistance, they crawled down to the deer and the struggling pack. Directing the coastguard to hang on to one leg of the beast, with the injunction to let go if the stag struggled too violently, Greig, having opened his hunting-knife, laid hold of an antler and managed to give the beast its *coup de grâce*. It was a tremendous risk, with the stag already partly over the cliff, but Greig took it, killed the stag and saved his hounds. Few more daring feats have ever been performed with the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, and

no one but a man of extraordinary resolution and courage would have attempted it.

Among the various distinguished foreign sportsmen who came to Exmoor for stag-hunting, M. Simons, Master of a well-known pack of hounds in Central France, was for some years a pretty regular visitor. About this time he invited Major Greig to visit him at his château, and have a taste of French hunting. Greig made the trip, and thoroughly enjoyed himself. He saw roe-deer hunting with M. Simons' hounds and stag-hunting with a neighbouring pack, and came back to Exford with several trophies of his sojourn. These found a place in that hospitable room at Edgcott where so many fine stags' heads adorned the walls. Some of these heads were magnificent—for the stags of Exmoor are in size, width of beam, and points not to be surpassed in any other part of Britain—and all of them were mementoes of great and remarkable hunts.

The relations between Major Greig and his huntsman, Sidney Tucker, and Ernest Bawden, the whipper-in—another excellent hunt servant who has proved himself a great success as huntsman since Tucker's resignation in 1917—were always of the happiest kind, and he was greatly missed by both of them. He was a first-rate man of affairs, and under his *régime* the business and management of the Hunt proceeded with the same smoothness, order and regularity as were inaugurated by Mr R. A. Sanders during his Mastership.

The Exmoor farmers, one and all, loved Morland Greig, and would have done anything for him. Far and wide over the moor and its surrounding country his genial and kindly presence was, and will be, sadly missed,

for many a long day, in every farmstead, cottage and hamlet, for he seemed to be known to everyone. And among all classes his brave, manly and gallant personality will be long treasured and remembered as a shining example of the best type of Englishman and sportsman. It must be a relief to his friends to know that the end of Major Greig, lamentable as it was to all of us, was sudden and merciful. He was standing a little way behind the trenches watching some long-distance firing. A shell struck him in the head, and he fell, and never moved again. He died at the age of fifty-two. A better man never buckled on a spur! He was typical of that splendid class of Briton, the English hunting man, many thousands of whom flocked to the colours and fought nobly during the late war. May the soil of Gallipoli, consecrated by the blood of so many brave men, lie lightly over him!

NOTES

[1] Lieutenant Schultz was, no doubt, on a spying expedition at this time, as so many Prussian officers were.

[2] *Horn and Hound.* Methuen & Co. 1927.

CHAPTER FIVE

Hares & their Ways

THE brown hare (*Lepus europæus*), so familiar to all country-dwellers in these islands, is surely one of the most interesting of all our wild mammals. Scattered about the world there are some twenty-odd species of the genus *Lepus*; but our well-known brown hare is certainly the handsomest, and probably the most engaging in its habits, of all the members of its race. It is found over the whole of Europe, saving only Northern Russia, Scandinavia and Ireland. In the last-named country brown hares are here and there found, but they are not indigenous, and have been imported thither in years gone by. In these countries its place is taken by the blue or mountain hare (*Lepus timidus*), which is also found in the more mountainous parts of Scotland and ranges as far east as Japan and Kamchatka.

The blue hare, which in high altitudes turns, like the ptarmigan, pure white in winter—save only its black-tipped ears—is found also in the Alps, the Pyrenees and the Caucasus. This species is smaller than the brown hare, and has shorter ears and hind-legs. It is also much inferior at the table, and by discerning cooks is regarded as fit only for making soup.

The hare is not unknown in history. At the battle of Roncesvalles, when Roland and his paladins, separated from Charlemagne by some miles of country, were being

defeated by the Moors, the echoes of Roland's horn were distinctly heard by the great king, who would have marched instantly to his relief, but that he was over-persuaded by that unworthy courtier and hater of the gallant Roland, Ganelon. "For a hare," said the traitor, "Roland would sound his horn all day!" And so the brave Roland, with his comrade Oliver and his other paladins, was overcome and slain.

In the Middle Ages, long before the fox came into favour as a beast of chase, the hare was regarded by Norman and Plantagenet and even Tudor sportsmen as ranking next to the deer in the system of venery. Turbervile, in his *Booke of Hunting*, thus writes: "I might well maintain that of all chases, the Hare maketh greatest pastime and pleasure, and showeth most cunning in hunting, and is meetest for gentlemen of all other huntings, for that they may find them at all times, and hunt them at most seasons of the year, and that with small charges. And again, because their pastime shall be always in sight, whereby they may indulge the goodness of their hounds, without great pains or travail."

Hares are, as is well known, very prolific, and if allowed too much freedom from destruction will increase enormously in numbers. In the great days of Norfolk shooting, when over-preservation was at its height, the number of hares killed was almost incredible, a thousand head or more in a day's shooting being occasionally recorded. The losses of the tenant farmers on and near such estates must have been very severe, for hares are great and destructive feeders, and will do much damage to crops. They feed at night, and are not, therefore,

easy to be dealt with, except by poachers. The young blades of wheat, root crops, clover, seeds, and winter-sown peas and beans are all favourite foods of these animals.

In Scotland blue hares were, in days gone by, almost as great a pest in certain districts. They were especially superabundant in the Glenlyon and Rannoch country, Perthshire. The late Sir Robert Menzies gave, years ago, particulars of a shoot in this district, on a moor lying on the south side of Loch Rannoch, belonging to Robertson of Struan. Sir Robert thus wrote: "When Lord Mansfield on one occasion had got 700 hares with four guns, he said to Struan that that score-number would never be exceeded. Struan replied that he would get double that number. He invited me, Sir Thomas Riddell, John Grant of Kilgraston and another gun. We started at 6 A.M., and by 5 P.M had shot 1530 hares. Then the guns refused to shoot any longer, and there were still two beats to drive. It was in the days of muzzle loaders, and the recoil was more than I bargained for. There could be no mistake as to the numbers, as there was a good deal of betting on the result. The schoolmaster of Kinloch Rannoch counted for Lord Mansfield, and the schoolmaster of the Bridge of Garry for Struan. Two years ago" (adds Sir Robert Menzies) "our forester complained that hares were much too plentiful; between 10 A.M. and 2 P.M. we shot 1070, when our ammunition was exhausted; otherwise we should surely have got several hundred more, as we were just in the thick of it when we were obliged to stop."

In great hare seasons—such, for instance, as 1922—enormous numbers of these animals are reared in places where they are allowed by protection to be as prolific

as they naturally are. The season of 1927 was also a very good one, but the extraordinarily wet summer played havoc with the infant hares, and the mortality, from what is called "fluke" and from *Strongylus*, which nearly always accompany a wet season, had its usual effect. Hare-hunters, after such a season, find that leverets are very weak, and kill in the early part of the season far more hares than usual in consequence. The worm known to naturalists as *Strongylus strigosus* is, in seasons of weak and bad hares, one of the prevailing causes of mortality. It is found in the stomach, and feeds on the blood, and is usually prevalent in low-lying countries having a wet soil. In seasons when this pest is prevalent all weakly hares should be shot, and the bodies of dead hares should be picked up and burned. The other dangerous disease, liver-fluke (*Fasciola hepatica*), is identical with that so fatal to sheep in wet seasons. These small, fresh-water worms are found in wet, low-lying country, and are picked up in the herbage by sheep, hares and rabbits alike, with very deadly results in every case.

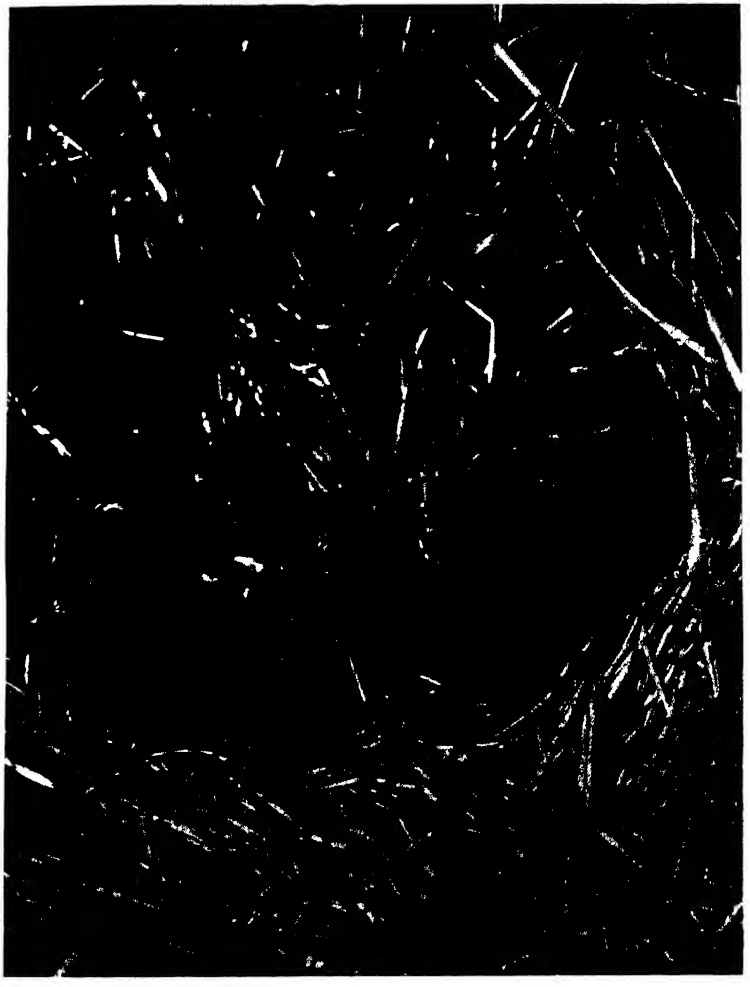
Hares are fecund animals, breeding three and four times in the season, from February to harvest-time. The leverets produced in the earlier and colder part of the year are usually few in number, sometimes only one at a birth. But in milder weather the number of young produced will vary from two to four, or even five. On various occasions there have been well-authenticated instances of as many even as six at a birth. The leverets are born with their eyes open, and are covered with hair —no doubt a provision of nature in the case of animals which are born and live entirely in the open. The hare is a good mother, and will carry her young from one

place to another when danger threatens, depositing them sometimes in extraordinary situations.

Some years ago I was playing golf one day on the Willingdon links, near Eastbourne. My opponent and I drove over a new bunker of earth and sods, where the grass had not had time to grow. As we passed the bunker I noticed three curious lumps, which I took to be mere sods of earth, on the face of the obstacle. Looking closer, I found these were three small leverets, lying close and flat to the bunker. I picked one up, but as she struggled violently let her go, and she ran off and concealed herself. The others remained quiescent, and we left them in peace. Now this bunker had been passed by more than one couple of players that morning. It was a singular place for the mother hare to have thus attempted to conceal her young. I suppose she had been suddenly disturbed or alarmed, and had thus been driven to deposit her infants in this dangerous situation.

Hares, if taken young, can be pretty easily tamed, but the males are inclined to be pugnacious, striking smartly, and even violently, with their forefeet, as they do when pairing and fighting in spring. Cowper, the poet, had three tame hares for some years, and closely described their habits in a long letter to *The Gentleman's Magazine*. They were often companions with him in his parlour, and played freely, especially in the evenings. They were shy of strangers, but were always greatly delighted with the visits of a miller, whose floury clothes possessed for them a most singular attraction. These were delightful pets, which afforded the poet endless amusement.

"Mad as a March hare" well describes the racings, chasings, gambols and furious stand-up fights in which



YOUNG LEVERETS

CHIEFLY OWING TO THE FACT THAT, UNLIKE RABBITS, THEY ARE BORN AND LIVE IN THE OPEN, LEVERETS ARE FOUND AT BIRTH WITH THEIR EYES OPEN AND COVERED WITH HAIR FAMILIES USUALLY VARY FROM TWO TO FOUR IN NUMBER, BUT FIVE AND EVEN SIX ARE OCCASIONALLY NOTICED

jack hares indulge during the courting season. They fight furiously, standing up to one another and boxing like trained pugilists. In a thickly populated hare country these extraordinary bouts, many of them most ludicrous performances, may be easily watched by the quiet observer; but you must be very secret and very quiet in the approach:

"And see through a rustle of leaves in an ecstasy leaps
The madman of March, at the sound of an alien tread,
On through the wood where the blade of the hyacinth peeps,
And the charm of the silence of evening is shattered and fled."

These animals have large, prominent eyes, with a wide field of vision, but probably, from long ages of pursuit by their many enemies, they are much more inclined to look behind them than to look forward. There are many instances of ludicrous and even fatal accidents to hares from this habit. An old countrywoman was walking up a long avenue, and hearing the cry of a pack of hounds looked keenly about her. Presently she espied a hare cantering down the avenue straight for her. The old lady was a practical soul and knew a thing or two. Stooping down, she lifted up her skirt, and never moved—Puss ran right into her arms, was snatched up in the skirt, secured by the hind-legs, and at once dispatched by a couple of blows with the fist at the back of the neck. The old lady got away with her booty, and thereafter enjoyed with her family an excellent dinner of jugged hare. This is a true story and not a fairy tale. Some years ago the hounds of the Weston-super-Mare Hunt were in full

chase after a hare, which took to a field of roots. Another hare was disturbed, and the two animals, running violently into one another, were both killed, one having its neck broken; the other dying apparently from shock. In *The Field* of 10th October 1903 is recorded the case of a shooting-dog and a hare colliding, with the result of a broken neck to the hare. These animals, in fact, seldom look in front of them, and often come to grief in consequence. They are, in truth, rather "hare-brained." As against this dangerous habit of vision, hares are very acute of hearing. Their long, tubular ears are splendid conductors of sound. Their sense of smell, too, is highly developed. The long and very powerful hind-legs of the hare endow this animal, of course, with great speed and leaping power. Anyone who knows the habits of these creatures is well aware that they take invariably uphill, if a hill is near, and that they climb great and steep downs with marvellous ease, speed and staying-power. In *The Field* of 6th February 1909 were recorded by Mr Barrett Hamilton the measurements—taken during frost—of a series of successive leaps by an Irish hare in County Wexford, going away at full speed when pursued by a dog. The measurements, *in inches*, were as follows: 90, 46, 90, 45, 86, 42, 62, 44, 86, 47, 60, 120. Mr Hamilton adds: "The snow being hard and frozen at the top, the hare did not sink into it, but left two slight but clearly recognisable footmarks on the surface after each leap." It will be noticed that ten feet is the longest leap. Snow, even if hard and frozen, is not so good and elastic a take-off as solid ground, and I am convinced that hares easily exceed these records when

really pushed by a brace of greyhounds. For many years I watched hares when hunted by a pack of harriers on Pevensey Marsh, and have seen them jump innumerable wet dykes; and I am convinced that I have seen them cover fully fourteen feet on occasion, when fully extended.

Hares, when pursued by hounds, have many clever methods of escape, and display even more cunning and sagacity on such occasions than the fox itself. I have watched a hare, well ahead of hounds, come to the corner of a big tract of marshland, intersected by dykes, and there weave a most singular maze of her own tracks, running in and out, hither and thither, and occasionally leaping widely aside. She then made for the nearest dyke, sprang easily across and went away on her flight. Hounds coming up before long were, of course, considerably delayed by the puzzle spread before them on the grass. Several minutes were wasted before they hit off the line, and, if I remember right, the quarry on this occasion made the best of her long start and escaped her pursuers. I have seen a hunted hare run the road for half-a-mile, then leap to the top of a four-foot-six-inch flint wall and canter another 200 yards along it before she leaped into an adjacent field. On another occasion our run hare went into an orchard and ran up an old gnarled apple-tree, which slanted towards the top of a thick hedge. Upon this hedge she alighted, and thence jumping to the ground went away, with a refreshing start thus gained on her eager pursuers.

Hares are excellent swimmers, and will not seldom take voluntarily long swims in pursuit of food, or for some particular reason of their own. Well-authenticated

swims of at least three-quarters of a mile have been recorded to the credit of these animals. When hunted by hounds, hares will fairly often go to sea. On the littoral of Pevensey Bay I have witnessed at least three examples within my own experience. In two of them the hare was followed and captured, in one case by the Master of the Hailsham Harriers, the late Alexander Campbell, who swam out and secured the quarry; in the other instance by himself and his hounds together. In yet another instance the hare escaped, and I heard the sequel from a coastguard.

Hounds checked on the beach and turned inland again, and picking up another hare went on in pursuit. The run hare was observed by a neighbouring coastguard—a close watcher of natural history—to swim out to sea for nearly a quarter of a mile. She presently returned, sat up on the beach, was violently sick—no doubt from the effects of swallowing salt water—and then, getting to work, cleaned herself, with her mouth and forepaws, carefully all over, and presently loped off to the marsh again. Hares are extraordinarily clean animals, and, as observed by the poet Cowper, are most particular in their toilets, over which they spend quite a considerable time.

It is unfortunate for the hare that in nine times out of ten she will, when pursued by hounds, take a circling course and nearly always return to the neighbourhood from whence she was first started. If she could persuade herself, like the fox, to make away in a direct line she could, no doubt, from her strength and powers of flight, much more often evade hounds than she does. Occasionally, for some reason known only to herself, or from a

thorough fright, she will make straight away and run for miles far across country. The grandfather of the late Master of the Cotley Harriers, a famous West Country pack which hunt hare and fox alternately, had, many years ago, a straight run with a hare from Cotley to the Wellington Monument—a well-known Somerset landmark—a distance of twelve miles as the crow flies. In 1900, when hunting with the Hailsham Harriers, we found a hare on Pevensey Marsh, close to the sea. This hare ran through a crowd of Christmas-holiday folk—who raised a great hullabaloo—and was so startled by the noise of her reception that she made straight inland, and was killed seven miles away in a direct line, after a tremendous hunt which covered more than twelve miles of country.

Although hares lie always in the open they will, when pressed, go to ground fairly often, their sanctuaries being usually rabbit burrows or other earths. I have known one seek refuge in a deep hole in the ancient brick wall of the moat (now dry) at Herstmonceaux Castle, Sussex. How, one wonders, had she made acquaintance with that particular place of refuge.

Fast as is the flight of a hare, it is not quite so rapid as the ordinary observer would suppose. A stout hare will easily distance in her first fleet rush a pack of good harriers—even of "Stud-book Harriers," which are mainly of pure foxhound blood. Occasionally you may meet with so stout a hare that she will distance and unsight a brace of strong and first-class greyhounds. Yet she is not, in reality, quite so fleet as these instances would lead one to suppose. Years ago the late Mr Allan McDonough, a great steeplechase rider

and a good man with hounds, writing to a friend, said: "Many times on the Curragh of Kildare, when riding one of my steeplechase horses, I have put up a hare, coursed her for a quarter of a mile, and turned her, which proved that my horse had the greater speed of the two."

This may have been an Irish hare, although the brown hare is now fairly well known in Ireland; but experienced Irish coursers will have it that Irish hares seldom yield as good a course as the English or brown hare. It is fair to say that a Wiltshire sportsman, commenting on Mr McDonough's performance, stated that he had tried the experience on the downs with a good but not a fast horse, but found that the hares invariably ran away from him when really pressed.

In France, after the early months of the war, hunting was discouraged by the French authorities, and the hounds taken out by English officers were sent home. But during the winter of 1916 a few keen British sportsmen who were "in rest" for a brief season behind the line, after hard work at the Front, tried the curious experiment of hunting hares, when riding at exercise, without the aid of hounds. They christened themselves "The Saisseval Harriers," and actually issued typewritten fixtures of their meets. The following is an extract from one of their letters:

"We are all going strong and enjoying ourselves thoroughly in this village. A great meet of the Harriers to-day, and our second kill of the season. There were no hounds, strange to say, but we ride like blazes and keep the hare in view, and, provided we can keep her out of the woods and copses, have a fair chance of bagging

her. It is extraordinarily hard to kill a beaten hare, though, and each time we have to drive her on to a friendly sheep-dog, which is usually to be seen somewhere in the vicinity. I take out two horses and a groom, so am well in front of the chase each time. We usually have a field of about a dozen mounted, and have great sport. There are any amount of hares, and we find in about three minutes after turning off the road. The only trouble is to stick to the run hare, and that necessitates somebody keeping her in view the whole way. Our first hare to-day was a very stout one, and even my horse, which is about the fastest, could barely keep her in sight till she turned. However, we got her round and made two big rings before she went to cover in a wood, and without a dog we were done. The second hare, found almost at once, gave us one big round and then got into a spinney, which we beat through, putting up two fresh hares. Then, by a stroke of luck, just as we were giving it up, my horse almost stepped on her, and off she went up the hill and over the open down about two miles back towards our starting-point. We presently got up to her and for some little time she dodged about among the horses. Then she seemed to get a second wind and made off just ahead of us until we picked up a sheep-dog and killed her."

In the firing line on the French front, during the Great War, hares seem to have been pretty plentiful, in spite of incessant firing. A correspondent of *The Field* (A. C. L. S.), in 1916, wrote thus:

"I have frequently seen hares directly behind the support line of trenches at Festubert, and especially near Hill 60. At the latter place, a few weeks ago, after

a heavy German bombardment, I counted no fewer than five dead hares on my return from the trenches. On examining them, I found that they had all been hit by pieces of shell, in three cases shrapnel bullets. None of them was more than 500 yards from the front-line trench."

CHAPTER SIX

The Peregrine Falcon

THIS splendid raptorial, celebrated down the ages as the favourite falcon of kings, princes and nobles, has an immensely wide range. It is found over the whole of Europe, a considerable part of Africa, North America and Asia, and has been reported even in Australia. In one form or another, allowing for sub-species, it is, in fact, a cosmopolitan bird, known all over the world.

Our true peregrine ranges from Scandinavia, Greenland, the island of Jan Mayen, and Novaya Zemlya to the Mediterranean, where it is found in winter. In the Far North are to be found its near allies, the gyr-falcons, which include the Greenland, Iceland and Norwegian falcons. These splendid birds, though more powerful, are lacking somewhat in the marvellous courage and fire of our British peregrines, and in our climate seem to lose something of their native vigour. It may be doubted whether even at their best they are the equals of our peregrine.

One of the finest descriptions of this glorious bird is to be found in Nicholas Cox's *The Gentleman's Recreation*, published in the reign of Charles II., wherein it is thus referred to:

"The element wherein the *Falconer* useth to trade is the *air* and though he dealeth sometimes in the water, yet he prefers the air before it, that yielding him most

Recreation; for it is unable to stop the high soaring of his Generous Falcon; in it she flies to such a height, that being lost to the sight of mortals, she seems to converse with Heaven alone; and, like Icarus, endangers her wings to be scorcht by the Sunbeams: and yet is fearless, cutting the fluid air with her nimble pinions, making her Highway over the steepest Mountains and deepest Rivers, and in her lofty career looks down with a seeming contempt on the greatest glories we most estimate; and yet such is her loyalty and obedience to her Master, that a word from his mouth shall make her stoop and condescend."

The female of the peregrine is known to experts as the falcon, the male being always called the tiercel. The falcon measures 18 inches and weighs as much as $2\frac{3}{4}$ lb.; while the male, or tiercel, attains some 15 inches and barely attains 2 lb. in weight. Striking characteristics of this splended falcon are the large, fierce, hazel-brown eyes, the long wings, perfectly adapted for swift and sustained flight, and the splendid plumage, slate-grey on the upper parts. The under parts vary from buff-grey to warm rufous, with a good deal of dark marking. The females are especially notable for the strong transverse markings of the breast. The head and cheeks are nearly black. The cere (round the eyes) and legs are bright yellow, and the formidable claws are enormously strong. Anyone who has had a trained falcon sitting on his fist, although guarded by a thick glove, cannot fail to have been impressed by the steel-like grip of this warlike bird.

Peregrines nest in a variety of places, and the falcons are fond of placing their eggs, usually from two to four in number, on ledges of tall cliffs, sometimes in old nests

of crows, ravens, and even herons, in rocks and trees. In Lapland and Siberia the eggs have been found even on the bare ground. These falcons never build themselves a nest, but they are extraordinarily faithful to the same places, and will there deposit their eggs and bring up their young decade after decade, and even century after century. There is—or was—an eyrie in Connemara known as far back at 1684 to have been frequented by peregrines from time immemorial. The young are driven off by the old birds in August, and in the autumn are still captured in considerable numbers on the open heaths near Valkenswaard, in Holland, where they have been taken for centuries for hawking purposes. The demand for these "red" or "passage" hawks is, however, in the nature of things, much on the decline in recent years. In these days few sportsmen seem to find time for the long and difficult process of training these birds for falconry.

Few incidents in bird life are more wonderful than the remating of the peregrine after being deprived by death of its fellow. The falcon will disappear from its eyrie for a few days, possibly even for a week; but it will inevitably come back with a new-found mate, discovered undoubtedly, in many instances, hundreds of miles away.

Although in India and other parts of Asia hawking with falcons, and in Turkestan and Mongolia even with eagles, has been pursued from remote ages of the past, in Europe the pastime cannot apparently be traced farther back than the middle of the fourth century. In the Middle Ages it reached probably its zenith, and kings, princes and nobles treated the sport with immense

honour. In France the king's *grand fauconnier* was an official of great eminence. His annual salary was four thousand florins; he was attended by fifty gentlemen and fifty assistant falconers, and he was allowed to keep three hundred falcons. He licensed every vendor of hawks in France, and received a tax upon every bird sold in that kingdom. In England also the king's grand falconer was an official of high rank and credit. I believe that the present Duke of St Albans, a descendant of Charles II., still enjoys that hereditary title, though, in these days, without emolument.

In Britain, although, of course, peregrines are not now in much request for the purpose of falconry, their eggs are, unhappily, a great deal raided by many eager collectors. These people, the majority of them men of considerable means, are unceasing in their pursuit of the eggs of rare birds, notwithstanding that these species are nominally protected by law. Not content with a clutch or two of eggs of a rare bird, such as the peregrine, these greedy collectors will obtain as many as from a dozen to twenty separate clutches, all showing differences of marking. This unholy and shameful traffic is busily carried on, and ought to be stopped. The coastline of Sussex yields, in the great chalk cliffs between Beachy Head and Seaford Head, one of the most favoured nesting places of the peregrine falcon. I lived for twenty years at Eastbourne, and was acquainted with the eyries of seven or eight pairs of peregrines in that locality. In the year 1908 Mr J. Walpole Bond—a great authority on birds—informed me that he had located ten pairs of peregrines in the cliffs between Hastings and Rottingdean. Notwithstanding that these eyries were nominally

protected, and that the neighbouring coastguards were on the lookout for robbers, these eyries were fairly often raided during the nesting season, some of them even twice during the period. The wealthy egg collector seems to have no sense of shame or honour, and still—usually by deputy—continues his robberies of the eggs of these and other rare species during the nesting season.

During my long residence in this part of Sussex I saw a good deal of these splendid falcons; in fact, whenever one walked along the beach or over the cliffs between Beachy Head and Seaford, until quite recently a very little-frequented region, one seldom failed to see these birds pursuing their wonderful careers and displaying their grand powers of flight. These great cliffs were for them a magnificent hunting-ground, and in few places could the flight and habits of peregrines be better observed. Food was plentiful. Gulls and other sea-birds, rooks, jackdaws, partridges, rabbits (on which peregrines occasionally feed), wild duck, redshanks, occasional kestrels and large numbers of domestic and carrier-pigeons, as well as wood-pigeons, stock-doves and, in summer, turtle-doves, all offered excellent prey to the swift, long-winged falcons. Carrier-pigeons in particular, coming from across the Channel or along the coastline, were—and still are—killed in large numbers by the Sussex peregrines. Their leg-rings are not seldom to be found at the eyries or along the cliff-tops, mute evidences that even such fleet fliers as they are fall victims to the all-conquering and rapacious hawks.

The falcon—female of the peregrine—it may be noted is even swifter in pursuit than her mate, the tiercel—this probably for the reason that she is of greater size.

I have on various occasions seen peregrines strike down and secure pigeons along this stretch of cliffs. One very interesting experience happened in January 1909, when Mr E. C. Arnold—now headmaster of Eastbourne College—and I had a walk with our guns down the Cuckmere river to its mouth, where Cuckmere Haven makes a gap in the tall cliffs at that point. Our only bag that morning was a black-throated diver, which my friend, a great collector, secured for the Eastbourne Museum, then lacking a specimen. We sat down to eat our sandwiches on the beach, at the corner of the cliff. Before long a pair of peregrines came sweeping over the cliff-top above us, at a marvellous pace, in pursuit of a domestic pigeon. One of them struck the quarry in the air fifty yards above our heads and hurled the unfortunate bird to the shingle within thirty yards of our feet. Down came both falcons to the feast. As they were in the act of alighting Arnold made an instinctive move with his right arm for his gun, which lay just out of reach. The keen-eyed peregrines instantly saw the movement and flew off. They came round once to have a look at us, and then, concluding, I suppose, that our neighbourhood was unhealthy, sheered off and disappeared. I picked up the pigeon, which was, of course, stone-dead, and in a few minutes, I suppose from its terrific impact with the shingle, quite stiff.

Numerous, however, as are their captures of pigeons and doves along these cliffs, the peregrines do not always come out winners. One September day in this same year, 1909, I caught sight of a stock-dove hurrying home to the chalk cliffs for all it could bustle. It was espied by a female peregrine, which had a pair of young ones

Top left and right PEREGRINE FALCONS, BY G E LODGE
Bottom left. PEREGRINE FALCON BY A THORBURN
Bottom right ICELAND FALCON, BY G. E LODGE

sitting on the cliffs, taking lessons in flights and captures. The falcon, for a wonder, saw her quarry just a trifle too late, and when she made her usual fatal stoop was not able to get sufficiently above the stock-dove. She made her dive for the bird, but with a swift and sudden swerve the latter just evaded the falcon's stroke and made good its retreat into the cliffs at hand. The two young peregrines, then about half-grown, were thus witnesses of their mother's discomfiture, and one of them uttered shrill screams, as if reproaching her for having missed her quarry. It was a very curious and interesting spectacle, which I and my companion would not have missed for a good deal. As a rule the peregrine's stoop is fatal. In this instance the falcon was manifestly unprepared, and made her stroke from an insufficient height. The dove had, however, a narrow squeak for it, and might well congratulate itself on its fortunate escape.

How seldom a really well-trained and brilliant peregrine will miss its quarry is well demonstrated by the feats of a wonderful falcon belonging a year or so before the war to my friend, Captain Gilbert Blaine, M.C., who is one of the very last of the British falconers, and has long been known as an expert in this once famous but now almost forgotten pastime.

In 1912 and 1913 Captain Blaine took a grouse moor in Caithness-shire and flew his falcons there. In 1913, using peregrines, his bag for the season was 403 grouse, a wonderful record for modern or even ancient days. His most successful falcon, out of six or seven flown, was one from Lundy Island, a spot long famous for its magnificent breed of these raptorials. This bird killed forty-four grouse running in successive flights. It then

scored a miss, but, going on, killed forty-six more of these strong game-birds, with but a single further miss. Ninety grouse to one falcon is a great achievement, but to have accomplished this with but two flights missed is, indeed, a very wonderful feat. During his campaigns in Caithness-shire Captain Blaine used setters for the purpose of finding game, and had his falcon "waiting on" overhead. The grouse when located were flushed, and the trained peregrine's attack then took place. This form of sport, pursued in a wild and picturesque countryside, is surely one of the most fascinating and delightful that could possibly be imagined; the pity of it is that, in these days, few falconers have the time, patience and opportunity to train their hawks, or the wherewithal to rent a good grouse moor when the preliminary schooling has been accomplished. Grouse-hawking is by no means easy work for the falcon or tiercel. This game-bird has a strong, round and very muscular body, and great wing-power, and is probably one of the most difficult quarries which even the peregrine, when hunting in the wild state, has to overcome.

Captain Blaine took over, some years before the war, the management of the Old Hawking Club, which formerly had its headquarters at Shrewton, on Salisbury Plain. From there rook-hawking on the Wiltshire downs yielded excellent sport, and each season the members of the club enjoyed many a good flight. Owing to the necessities of army training, the creation of the various camps now existing, and the spread of barbed-wire enclosures, the Old Hawking Club has, unhappily, for the present ceased its operations. Whether in the future some other resort for falconry may be discovered and

the pastime of the club revived is uncertain. But the omens are not too favourable. It was announced in *The Field* in June 1927 that in the meantime Captain Gilbert Blaine, whose address was 9 Lansdown Crescent, Bath, would be always ready to give useful information to anyone wishing to take up falconry seriously.[1]

Passage hawks in the autumn may be obtained from Karl Mollen, Valkenswaard, Eindhoven, North Brabant, Holland, providing that a sufficient number—say from eight to twelve—are booked in June and July. Goshawks can also be procured from Germany, but must be ordered before the end of May, if eyasses (young birds) are wanted.

Although a full-grown grouse is a pretty good handful even for so strong and daring a raptorial as the peregrine, there can be no doubt that these falcons will, on occasion, attack even so big and heavy a bird as a wild goose.

Two or three years ago "I. P." described vividly in *The Field* such a chase:

"A skein of geese were seen flying in Perthshire, near the Craig an Lochan, at a height of 1600 feet. Presently a peregrine came out of the clouds and quickly overtook them. By the time it had done so, the hawk had lost height until it was on the same level as the geese. The peregrine singled out one of the rear birds, and then a series of most interesting races started. The peregrine soon turned the goose away from the rest, which flew on quite unconcernedly and were soon lost in the clouds. The pursuer now started to climb above the goose, and the latter flew its fastest and straightest, honking loudly all the time until the falcon stooped, when the goose

turned and the peregrine missed. The goose then zoomed up, and for a short space rose faster than its pursuer. This happened four or five times, taking them twice up and down the Lochan, until finally they came within a score of yards of the car, which the peregrine saw, and, wheeling away in fright, gave up the attack."

As a matter of fact, this splendid falcon knows no fear of any of the things that fly. It has been recorded by Mr C. H. Donald, writing from India, that one of these birds attacked with great fury a Pallas's fishing eagle, flying across a river with something in its claws, and twice sent its feathers floating in all directions before the eagle managed to reach some trees on the other side.

A heavy, full-grown wild duck is no mean conquest, yet the peregrine thinks nothing of attacking and striking down one of these fine birds. Twice, in the Orkneys and in Sutherlandshire, have I seen this feat accomplished, apparently with complete ease and the most wonderful grace. The downward stoop of this falcon when well poised is lightning-like in its speed. I know nothing in nature to equal it. Yet the peregrine, when sharp-set, especially when hunting to feed its young, does not disdain much humbler quarry, and will strike even the homely starling. I was fishing on Loch Stenness, in the Orkneys, some years since, and my boatman, as a peregrine flew above us, told me how one of these falcons had, a few days before, been baffled by a small flock of these birds, upon which the peregrine had swiftly descended. There was an old white horse grazing on the side of the loch, and the starlings, keeping their heads, swerved, and landed just under its belly. From this

haven of safety they refused to budge, and the falcon flew away defeated.

The late Mr Howard Saunders, in his famous *Manual of British Birds*, states truly that the peregrine will sometimes sweep rabbits off the side of a cliff. It is not well known that peregrines will attack rabbits, but I can vouch for two instances where one of these falcons has successfully attacked this quarry on open ground. In October 1917, while walking near Cow Gap, under Beachy Head, I heard some fierce screams, and, turning, saw a number of schoolboys watching a fierce contest between two peregrines fighting on the ground. One of these birds had grabbed a rabbit on the side of the down, and the other was evidently trying to secure a share of the plunder. While they thus fought, the falcon which had first seized the rabbit released its prey, and "Mr Bunny" at once scrambled off and got clean away. The two peregrines then flew off beyond Beachy Head, one pursuing the other and apparently keeping up the quarrel.

Mr Cracknell, formerly the landlord of the Birling Gap Hotel, under Beachy Head, a keen bird-watcher, well acquainted with the movements of these falcons, informed me that he had seen a peregrine strike a rabbit on the down side, and that he had been able to drive off the falcon and secure the animal, which was too much injured to get away. Passing the Birling Gap Hotel, one day, I saw a young peregrine, which had been captured in a curious way and was temporarily confined in an empty parrot's cage of large size. Mr Cracknell's son had retrieved this young falcon from the incoming tide, where he found it struggling in the surf. How the

bird got there was uncertain. It may possibly have made a stoop at some sea-bird and found itself unable to rise from the sea; but in my judgment the falcon, which was quite a young one, had been trying an early flight, and, miscalculating its powers, had fallen into the sea. I was glad to hear that it was afterwards released. I do not think that peregrines are, as a rule, much addicted to taking birds off the surface of the sea. It is for them a somewhat perilous operation. Yet that they do so occasionally is certain.

In January 1926 Mr G. F. B. de Gruchy, a Jersey correspondent of *The Field*, wrote as follows:

"While watching with my glasses diving birds in St Aubin's Bay on 5th December I saw a peregrine falcon making short stoops at one of the smaller grebes, whenever it appeared on the surface, so forcing it to dive again instantly. The falcon struck with her feet, which I could see hanging as she approached the grebe. How long the hunt had lasted I do not know, but I watched it for seventeen minutes before the end came. The dives grew shorter and shorter, showing that the grebe was exhausted for want of air, and at last the falcon picked it up; apparently she struck it dead, as it did not flutter its wings. She carried it, flying heavily, about half-a-mile to an isolated rock, where she ate it. The meal lasted three-quarters of an hour. A Great Northern Diver, which was fishing quite close to the grebe, was not molested by the falcon. This [added the writer] is the first time that I have seen peregrines take a bird off the sea; indeed, I was inclined to think that they were afraid to do so, as I have seen this falcon stoop at and miss wild duck, which promptly fell like stones into the

sea, whereupon the falcon left them unmolested on the surface."

I have a good many times seen peregrines in pursuit of wild duck near lakes or rivers, and I have also noted that those duck which managed to evade the falcon's flight always found safety in the water, the peregrine not attempting to try for them once they had reached it.

What weight exactly a peregrine is capable of carrying I am uncertain. I have seen these birds, at different times, flying with a partridge, pigeon, jackdaw or golden plover in their talons, and making a fairly comfortable passage. A friend of mine, riding over Beachy Head, was one day passed by one of these falcons carrying a gull. It came immediately over him; he shouted and waved his arm, and the falcon thereupon dropped the gull and went on. The gull was quite dead. I doubt if a peregrine could fly far with so heavy a bird as a mallard. Its tremendous attacking and killing powers enable it to overcome so weighty a prey as a shelduck or so tall and unwieldy a quarry as a heron; but, magnificent flier as it is, it could not, in the nature of things, travel far with such burdens, which it usually devours where they are brought down.

A German naturalist has stated that it is not unusual for a pair of peregrines to take up their abode for a whole winter in a town, where they make their vantage coign on some high church steeple, their favourite prey consisting usually of pigeons. This habit has been familiar for centuries also in this country, and peregrines are often to be seen resting on the magnificent spire of Salisbury Cathedral, where I have had the opportunity of observing them. In winter, after hunting

the country around for food, they usually came in about half-an-hour before dusk, the female being always careful to select her perching-place before the tiercel took his station.

Peregrine falcons, thanks to their wild and wary nature and the difficult and inaccessible places which they choose for their eyries, are, one is glad to record, still fairly abundant in Britain. Far distant is the day, one may hope and prophesy, before these noble creatures shall have passed from the avifauna of our country.

NOTE

[1] I believe that Captain Blaine may still be applied to at his Bath address.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Elephants & Ivory

NEXT to gold and precious stones ivory has, more than any other substance required for the decoration and delight of mankind, been sought vigorously and systematically from the earliest ages of the past. It seems to have been universally desired from the very dawn of civilization, while even in prehistoric times man seems to have betaken himself to the primitive decoration of tusks. The Bible has many a reference to its beauties and its values, and in the East the wonderful carvings of patient generations have from a far distant period yielded immeasurable treasures of art for the gratification of the powerful, the noble and the rich.

Until a hundred and eighty years ago the supply of this beautiful and treasured substance seemed inexhaustible. Asia still possessed great numbers of elephants; while in Africa the vast stores of the interior, although to some small extent known and utilised by the early Egyptians, were unrealised and almost unexploited. Elephants were trapped and destroyed by natives, but only in small numbers, for they were formidable beasts to attack with spear and arrow. Until the introduction of firearms little impression was made upon their legions, even in the wild areas nearest to the civilised Egypt of those days.

At the other end of the great continent, when the Dutch

in South Africa began their first efforts in colonisation there in the year 1652, they found elephants scattered in great herds over much of the territory—wherever, in fact, these animals could find suitable feeding. Hunting for ivory began at an early period of the Dutch occupation, but with the primitive firearms of those days the process of extermination — now almost complete from the Zambesi to the Cape Peninsula — was very slow. Ivory had been long in use among the Kaffir and other Bantu tribes; and the writer can remember Kaffir chiefs many years ago in Cape Colony who were still proud of the thick and magnificent armlets—orange-coloured from age and usage—which had been handed down to them by their forefathers. Down to the beginning of the nineteenth century the Dutch used rests for their long pieces, and with such primitive weapons they were unable to destroy many of the great tusk-bearing mammals which they found so abundant. Even down to the time of F. C. Selous, that great modern hunter, who first made his appearance in the veldt in 1872, the Transvaal Boers were still using heavy smooth-bore elephant guns, weighing 15 lb. to 16 lb. apiece, carrying spherical bullets running four to the pound, and discharged by 17 drams of trade powder. Selous, then an enthusiastic youngster, on his way up country, had his only good rifle stolen, and bought one of these cheap smooth-bores, termed by the Dutch hunters *roers*, from the noise of their explosion. With this cumbrous and punishing weapon he hunted on foot for two or three seasons, slew many elephants, and gained much ivory. I have often handled this extraordinary firearm, and marvelled at the strength, energy and courage required

for its use by Selous and the Dutch hunters of his time in a hot and exhausting climate. After 1874 Selous abandoned this primitive weapon, and betook himself to more up-to-date and less trying rifles.

Yet even with their old-fashioned weapons the Boers of South Africa had cleared most of Cape Colony of elephants by the beginning of last century, and were already exploiting the regions beyond the Orange River. The narratives of Sparrmann, Le Vaillant and Sir John Barrow towards the close of the eighteenth century, and the scientific expeditions of Burchell (1813-1814) and Dr Andrew Smith (1834) in the earlier years of the nineteenth, began to attract the attention of British sportsmen to the wonderful hunting-grounds of Southern Africa.

In 1837 that enthusiastic gunner and zoologist, Captain (afterwards Sir William) Cornwallis Harris, made his famous expedition and penetrated regions hitherto virgin to the white hunter. In the country now known as the Transvaal he encountered elephants in the Magaliesberg hills in amazing plenty, and shot what ivory he wanted. Some of his descriptions are worth transcribing. After killing his first elephant he and his party came upon a valley where "the whole face of the landscape was actually covered with wild elephants. There could not have been fewer than three hundred within the scope of our vision. Every height and green knoll was dotted over with groups of them, whilst the bottom of the glen exhibited a dense and sable living mass—their colossal forms being seen emerging into the open glades, bearing branches in their trunks, with which they indolently defended themselves from the flies." Later in the day the sportsman passed three

other large herds. On another hunt, "a verdant glen, some two or three miles in length, was completely studded with clumps of elephants."

A great naturalist as well as a great sportsman, Cornwallis Harris is a faithful witness, and his accounts are to be relied upon. What a glorious hunting veldt he must have traversed! But even while he was viewing these wonderful scenes the Boers of the Great Trek were advancing into the Transvaal country, and in the same year (1837) they defeated the Matabele Zulus, drove them north of the Limpopo, and took possession of the whole region. By the year 1870 the Boers had cleared most of the Transvaal of elephants, and their hardiest and most restless hunters were at work in regions far beyond the Transvaal borders.

Meanwhile, Cornwallis Harris's two fine volumes—his *Wild Sports of Southern Africa*, and *Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa*, both illustrated in colour from his own drawings—had attracted much notice by British sportsmen, among them Gordon Cumming and W. C. Oswell, who penetrated in the forties far towards the Zambesi, and gathered immense spoil in the shape of trophies and ivory. That great hunter, Oswell, with his friend Murray, accompanied Livingstone on his first journey, and with him discovered Lake Ngami in 1849. All that region then carried vast numbers of elephants. Livingstone himself has told us that in the year 1850 no fewer than 900 elephants were slain in the neighbourhood of the lake.

Gordon Cumming's fine book on big-game hunting attracted to South Africa William Charles Baldwin, another of the great line of English hunters. Between

1852 and 1860 he was shooting in Zululand and in the Lake Ngami and Zambesi regions, and gathered much ivory. Many other British, Boer and Griqua hunters were at the same period all hard at work. Baldwin, like the Boers, did all his hunting on horseback, and was very successful. His striking book, *African Hunting from Natal to the Zambesi*, published in 1863—a wonderful narrative of adventure—in turn riveted the attention of many other adventurers, including the late F. C. Selous. The writer can remember, as a boy, the fine illustrations, by Wolf and Zwecker, of that wonderful book, and the fascination they had for the youthful mind.

And so the game went on. Weapons became more and more perfect, and even the primitive hunting Boers were by the seventies of last century discarding their 4-bore elephant guns and betaking themselves to Westley Richards, Martini-Henry and other first-class and, for the gunner, far less punishing rifles. In 1881 Franz Joubert, who had hunted with Baldwin in the fifties, was with his commando at Laing's Nek, fighting successfully against the British by the aid of first-class modern sporting rifles. It is scarcely to be wondered at that poor men eagerly pursued elephants for ivory. Even as far back as 1837 Cornwallis Harris stated that a pair of good tusks was worth to the hunter £60 to £70. William Finaughty, whose name is less known, but who was a mighty hunter, followed Baldwin, and between 1864 and 1871 gathered much ivory in the regions between the Limpopo and the Zambesi. In 1866 he shot 95 elephants and brought out tusks scaling 5000 lb. He was then getting 6s. 10½d. per lb. for his ivory. In 1869 he killed 111 elephants during the season, and his ivory

brought him £1750. He once shot 10 during a day's hunt. South African elephants never produced the magnificent teeth of the great pachyderms living in the Nile regions, and Finaughty's best pair of tusks weighed no more than 250 lb. the pair. While Finaughty was hard at work, Boer and other hunters were all hotly in search of ivory. He speaks of Jan Viljoen, a famous Transvaal Voer-trekker, who with his sons killed no fewer than 210 elephants in the year 1866. The Dutch were very wasteful in their methods and slew freely cows and young bulls — anything carrying ivory. The most wanton slaughter of which the writer has record was that of the Van Zyl family, who, in the early seventies, drove a herd of 104 elephants into a marsh and killed every one before sundown. This happened in the Okavango country beyond Lake Ngami. F. C. Selous, the most careful and chivalrous of big-game sportsmen, appeared in the hunting veldt of South Africa just after Finaughty's retirement. He hunted ivory for a living, but he never shot wastefully or unnecessarily, although in his time he achieved much ivory. By the year 1885 he had come to the conclusion that the game was scarcely worth the candle; the finest elephants had been shot out south of the Zambesi, and he turned his attention to other pursuits.

Nothing in nature could resist such slaughter as I have described, and by the year 1890 the whole of South Africa, including the splendid Natal, Zululand and Amatonga game countries, had been practically cleared of elephants. In the far north a troop or two remained in Khama's country, Bamangwato, and in the Matabele and Mashuna countries—now known as Southern

Rhodesia—but few big bulls, carrying good teeth, were among them. Curiously enough there was a small stock remaining in the extreme south of Cape Colony, where two herds, protected by the Government, were to be found in the Knysna Forest, and the Addo Bush, near Port Elizabeth. The Knysna Forest elephants have by this time vanished, and quite recently the Addo Bush herd, which for years had been a nuisance to neighbouring farmers, were released from the protection of a hundred years, and are now greatly reduced in numbers. The small remnant, in the dense jungle they inhabit, are very difficult to get at, and very savage; but they, too, must ere long disappear. The fact is, farming and elephants cannot flourish together, and in the long run farming is not likely to be the sufferer.

The ivory trade of South Africa naturally began to dwindle under the assault of these numerous and determined elephant-hunters between 1840 and 1875. But even in the latter year £60,402 worth of ivory was exported from Cape Colony; and I can remember, on my first visit to that country in 1876, seeing many a wagon-load of fine ivory rolling down country to Port Elizabeth. At that time there were only sixty miles of railway in all South Africa—the piece of line from Cape Town to Worcester. Ten years later, in 1886, the export from Cape Colony had dwindled to £2150. From Natal, in 1873, £17,199 worth of ivory was exported. In 1885 only £4100 worth.

The discovery of the Nile sources and the great lakes in the sixties by Speke, Grant and Baker opened up a new and wonderful vista of sport for European hunters. The Arab slave-traders had, of course, long been busy

in those regions, and also in the Sudan and adjacent territories. But their weapons were poor and feeble, and the drain upon elephant life, assisted though it was by native hunting in many parts of Central Africa, was comparatively light. One of the first and finest books of that period, Sir Samuel Baker's *The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia*, gives an excellent idea of the wealth of animal life in those regions in the sixties, and of the wild Hamran Arabs, probably the finest and boldest native hunters in all Africa, to whom I shall refer later on, in Chapter XIV.

The wonderful improvement in firearms and the opening up of huge territories—such as the Belgian Congo and British and German East Africa—to European enterprise began, by the late eighties, to make a vast and tragic change in the future of the elephant in those countries. Big-game hunting became a fashion among British sportsmen, and by the early nineties a good many men who made the collection of ivory a business were hard at work. All of these found in the vast territory now known as Kenya Colony, and in Uganda, a magnificent hunting-ground, where huge bull elephants—whose ivory had been growing for a hundred and thirty or a hundred and fifty years—were laid low, and their wonderful trophies secured. The late A. H. Neumann was one of the most successful of these ivory-hunters, and his excellent book, *Elephant-Hunting in East Equatorial Africa*, well describes the adventures he enjoyed and the magnificent trophies he secured in the noblest hunting-grounds to be found in the whole continent of Africa.

The moist heat and rich feeding-grounds of the Upper Nile regions seem to unite to produce the finest and

heaviest ivory in the world. In the late Sir Edmund Loder's collection there was a single tusk from this part of Africa which measured 9 ft. 3 in. in length and scaled 180 lb. Major P. H. G. Powell-Cotton, a great and successful hunter, has in his collection at Quex Park, Thanet, a pair of tusks scaling respectively 198 lb. and 174 lb.—truly a marvellous record. His Majesty the King has a single tusk weighing 165 lb. A single tusk in the British Museum, from Kenya, measures 10 ft. 2 in., and scales 226½ lb. A pair, brought from Uganda by Captain H. S. Burrough, weigh together 340 lb. Another pair, also from Uganda, belonging to Captain E. B. Place, scale respectively 176 lb. and 179¾ lb.—a total of 355¾ lb.

These examples, taken from Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game*—a book most carefully exact—are only a few of the magnificent ivory trophies obtained from this wonderful region—a region which must have abounded through long ages of the past in the most marvellous, though unseen, displays of ivory in the world. The longest pair of tusks of which I have a note come from Kenya Colony, and measure 11 ft. 5½ in., and 11 ft. over the curve. Their greatest circumference is 18½ in. and their combined weight 293 lb. Captain Place's wonderful tusks have, it may be noted, a circumference of 24 in. and 24⅝ in. respectively. These and many other magnificent teeth from the Nile regions are not now likely to be often equalled. Most of the old bulls, carrying the most wonderful ivory in the world, have been shot out, and it will take at least another fifty years, probably a good many more, before such tusks could again be recorded, even if the elephants of this region of Africa

were suffered to pursue their lives in peace and quiet—a very improbable event.

During the early nineties the rate of animal slaughter was so great, even in these favoured regions, that game laws and penalties were enacted. These laws have been followed by somewhat similar enactments in other parts of the African continent. Large game reserves are also set apart, where no shooting is allowed. In British territory it may be said that these regulations are on the whole fairly well observed. But the country is so vast, so wild, and so difficult to patrol or police properly, that, even in our own regions, it is a matter of impossibility to protect all game—and especially elephants—at all times. In the territories of other countries than ours the protection afforded is less good, and in some of them disgracefully evaded or ignored. There is a good deal of poaching and illicit killing in all regions, even in our own, but especially in the country between Abyssinia and Kenya, where ivory-poaching and slave-raiding are wantonly and disgracefully still carried on. In purely native territories game laws, although they may be nominally enacted, are usually set at naught, as happens in Abyssinia.

We may glance now at the contents of several books (see note at end of this chapter), all of which as narratives are not only more than usually interesting, but contain much evidence as to the waste of elephant life and ivory in the richest regions of Africa.[1] They suggest also many ominous reflections as to the future of these great and valuable mammals. Major Henry Darley, in his *Slaves and Ivory*, has produced an extraordinarily interesting narrative. His book deals mainly with the closed area

between the Kenya Protectorate and Abyssinia, a vast district which for years past has been the raiding-ground of the evil military aristocracy of Abyssinia, the members of which will do no work themselves and have been in the habit of raiding for slaves into native regions beyond their borders. They raid also for ivory, and whether in search of ivory or slaves, or both, their conduct to the unfortunate natives whose lands they descend upon has invariably been of the cruellest and most infamous kind. They have, in fact, devastated and made deserts of great stretches of country. The British Government, in the territories of Uganda, Kenya and the Sudan, for reasons not difficult to explain after the exhaustion and financial pressure of the Great War, has been far too tender with these raiders, and has turned a deaf ear to the appeals which have been made for help. To quote *The Kenya Observer* of 13th May 1925: "The completeness of devastation by Abyssinians is the completeness of the locust, but more cruel."

The slave-producing area of Abyssinia has now practically ceased to exist, and the feudal chiefs of that country are turning their attention to the lowlands lying between Abyssinia and the Nile to the west, and Uganda and Kenya to the south. It is high time that the British Government asserted itself in these unhappy regions.

Major Darley, who is described in Mr Hobley's introduction as "a gallant Yorkshireman to whom adventure is the salt of life," wandered in search of elephants and ivory among many strange and little-known tribes, some of them cannibals. His fine presence, yellow beard and honourable dealing, and above all his courage, procured him always a free passage among all these native folk.

Like the late A. H. Neumann, and other adventurous sportsmen, he was not always inquisitive as to territorial limits and game licences. When Major Athill met his future guide at Addis Abeba, the capital of Abyssinia, he remarked humorously to the head of our Legation that he had had in his pocket for five years a warrant for Darley's arrest for being in a closed area without a warrant. As a matter of fact, Major Darley had once obtained a permit from the Governor of Uganda, but in his long wanderings had not been made aware that this had been withdrawn.

Darley found Toposa a splendid district for elephants, and in these and other wild regions secured much ivory, which he disposed of through Abyssinia. On one occasion, after the death of Menelik and the subsequent turmoil throughout Abyssinia, he advanced half his ivory, to the value of more than £1000, in order to free numbers of native debtors from slavery—for, by the Abyssinian law, the debtor, if he cannot pay, becomes the slave of his creditor. Major Darley proved himself a true knight-errant on this and many other occasions. His adventures and escapes during his wanderings in all these regions are wonderfully interesting, and modestly told. His descriptions of the horrors of Abyssinian slave-raiding among the unfortunate Shangalla tribe give a fair idea of the state of things still obtaining in these countries.

Some of his elephant-hunting was extraordinarily successful. In Toposa, he says, " I soon got all the ivory I could conveniently carry. . . . I have found it my experience that there is nothing which stirs the cockles of the heart so profoundly as the sight of a good

bunch of bull elephants. Old Jorrocks may sing of foxhunting, and good sport that is, but if he had known anything about elephant-hunting, I am sure he would have given it pride of place." In another part of the country, below the Boma plateau, he records: "I shot elephants till I was tired." Abyssinians, Baluchis and Swahili elephant-hunters are also at work in regions between Kenya and Abyssinia, and so vanishes the elephant and its ivory from Africa. Baluchis seem to be great collectors. Major Darley speaks of a single band of these hunters who had with them a ton of ivory —all poached, of course.

Captain W. D. M. Bell's *The Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter* is purely a book of sport and adventure. It is finely illustrated by the author's drawings and gives a wonderful picture of the wild life of the Upper Nile and adjacent regions in years gone by. His elephant-hunting career began as far back as 1898, when bull elephants, carrying heavy teeth, were much more abundant than they now are. His achievements are well known to the initiated, and it is probable that few hunters of big game have ever had so long and so successful a career. From constant practice, Captain Bell became an expert with small-bore rifles, the ·275 or ·256; and most of his elephants were brought down by the brain-shot with one or other of these weapons. This shot of course requires great confidence, courage and accuracy. His records are certainly wonderful, from the point of view of the ivory-hunter pure and simple, though they may be deplored from that of the preservation of the elephant. He once killed forty-four bulls in three days' shooting, and his fine photographs

give a fair idea of what his bag of ivory was like on one of his many expeditions. In the Dabossa country, where he found a wonderful plenty of elephants, he once killed in a single day nine bulls, whose tusks scaled 1463 lb., and were worth in London, £877. Fifteen bull elephants in one day appears to be his record. Altogether he secured in the Dabossa country, then marvellously rich in ivory, 14,000 lb. weight of tusks, "all excellent stuff." Between six and seven tons of ivory in one shooting season must be surely a record for a single gunner! In the Lado Enclave, just after the Belgian occupation ceased, he found elephants, for a hundred miles inland from the river, crowded into the Nile swamps. Here after two months' shooting he had more ivory than his men could carry, and was compelled to bury the remainder, to be sent for and safely recovered later on. In the Enclave he passed to a wonderful piece of country:

"High, cold and with rolling hills. . . . In the far distance could be seen, from some of the higher places, a dark line. It was the edge of 'Darkest Africa,' the great primeval forest, spreading for thousands of square miles. Out of that forest and elsewhere had come hundreds upon hundreds of elephants to feed upon the young greenstuff. Hunting there was too easy. Soon natives flocked to our camps, and at one time there must have been 3000 of them. They were noisy and disturbed the game, no doubt, but when it came to moving our ivory, they were indispensable."

Captain Bell adds his testimony to that of Major Darley as to the cruel raiding still going on between Uganda and Kenya and Abyssinia. After he had crossed

the Turkwell, that strange and romantic river which rises in the lava crater of Mount Elgon, he found that "the peaceful, polite and prosperous-looking trader of Mumias became the merciless and bloody dacoit as soon as he had crossed that river and was no longer under European control." Their well-armed raiding caravans massacred the unfortunate tribes-people among whom they passed. On their side the Karamojans murdered any stragglers from Swahili and other expeditions passing through their country. A pitiful business, which England ought never to have allowed to continue.

At Goré, on his way through Abyssinia to the Gelo river, in 1908, Captain Bell came to the country of Ras Tasama, the famous chief, who reigned over the whole Western portion of Abyssinia, paying to the Emperor a tribute of slaves, gold-dust and ivory. One native chief, in the lowlands below Goré, was required to pay to the Ras 300 tusks annually. This he managed easily, so great was the number of elephants then in his country. Captain Bell was heavily mulcted by Ras Tasama before that personage would give him permission to shoot elephants. After a three weeks' process of squeezing, the Ras had obtained from him fifty pounds in gold, a fine sporting rifle and ammunition, eight mules, fifteen camels, several other firearms and sundry cases of liquor. The Ras had carried out a successful raid shortly before Captain Bell's arrival, and had captured and made slaves of 10,000 men, women and children, from tribes who could not or would not produce ivory. These raids were carried out with every circumstance of brutality.

One of the most fascinating of the hunting trips so

well described by this author was made in 1921, up a mysterious river known as the Bahr Aouck, a large affluent which joins the Shari river, apparently between Darfur and Lake Chad. Here, with a friend, after a trek of four long months by water and land, he found a new and fascinating country, full of game and absolutely unknown to Europeans. They had taken with them two canoes, and were assisted by six native "boys." The elephants found in this region knew nothing of the sound of a rifle and were quite unscared. Rhinoceros were extraordinarily plentiful and at times "a perfect nuisance"; so that they had occasionally to be shot "to avoid accidents"! Lions were of great size, very abundant, and so "impertinent" that they occupied with impunity the carcass of an elephant only fifteen yards from the nearest camp-fire and defied the natives to approach them. Captain Bell and his friend killed six lions in this region; the skins were of a peculiar olive tinge, with a scanty mane of a lighter tint. Some of them were of immense size. The sportsmen came presently on a tribe of natives, who showed them plenty of elephants. These people, who lived about two hundred miles to the south, had once been under the great slave-raiding Sultan Senussi, but since his death were within the French sphere of influence. Others whom they encountered hunted elephants on horseback, with enormous spears, kept razor-sharp and having a leaf-shaped head from seven to nine inches across. These men are deadly in attack, thrusting their spears into the elephants' vitals, and also ham-stringing them. They are permitted to hunt elephants in this manner, on payment of a small fee, "in order that they may acquire the

wherewithal to pay their taxes—a policy shortsighted indeed, when we remember Darwin's calculation that in 900 years two elephants became a million!" The two hunters shot elephants on the Bahr Aouck till they could transport no more ivory and then turned homewards.

Captain Bell was an ivory-hunter pure and simple, and, like his predecessors, has no hesitation in acknowledging the fact. He may be termed one of the very last of the great elephant-hunters, and in these days very few European sportsmen are likely to have the golden opportunities he found open to him, and of which he took due advantage. In early boyhood his imagination was fired by Gordon Cumming's book, just as Selous and Baldwin had been, and as Cumming himself had been lured by the descriptions of Cornwallis Harris; and so to Africa he presently went, and fulfilled his destiny by slaying many elephants and amassing tons of ivory. You cannot restrain such men—adventure is in their blood! But he has written a most attractive as well as a wise and instructive book, and although we may deplore the downfall of the mighty elephant we cannot but admire the coolness, skill and courage of a very brave and skilled sportsman.

Incidentally, Bell explodes the long-cherished legend of the elephants' cemetery, a legend having its origin doubtless in the wondrous story of Sinbad's seventh voyage. Once in the Dabossa country he came upon a place where the bleached and much-weathered skulls and bones of elephants at first sight strongly conveyed the idea of a cemetery. Captain Bell explains their presence. Close by were "three pools of intensely clear green water, round the edges of which were glistening

lines of white powder, evidently high-water marks. I tasted the water, it was certainly very bitter." The story told by Africans living near was that some years previously, during an intense drought, animals and men came up there, drank the water, and immediately died. Natron, a form of nitre, seems to be the impregnation; reinforced and condensed by the drought, its effect on animal life was deadly.

Another extremely interesting writer on elephant-hunting is Mr A. Blayney Percival, who has spent nearly thirty years in East Africa, twenty-two of them in the Game Department of what is now known as the Kenya Colony. He has been a great sportsman as well as a good naturalist, and his bag of fifty lions has not often been exceeded by any hunter. In his *Game Ranger's Note Book*, edited by Mr E. D. Cuming, he devotes two long chapters to the present position of the elephant in those regions. His conclusions may be shortly summarised as follows. The elephant, which has suffered enormous persecution in the past from native and white hunters, has increased in most districts, but "the number of bulls bears no proportion to the whole population; in fact it becomes more and more difficult to find a male with tusks of a size that offers any adequate return for the cost of the licence. Large ivory is seldom seen, even in reserves. Hence the majority of adult males do not tempt the European sportsmen." A remarkable change this, in thirty or even twenty years from the days when big bulls and huge ivory were so abundant.

From the settled areas, which are steadily increasing, elephants are, of course, disappearing. Near Nakuru

the whole district is now cut up into farms and, "so far as the open ground is concerned, the elephant's day is over; but they still approach within a few miles, always inside the forest on the Laikipia side. These forests were at one time the haunt of some fine bulls. Now the resident population appears to consist entirely of cows, but as these are doing extremely well under protection, and increasing in number, their future is assured." Generally Mr Blayney Percival is of opinion that elephants are on the increase in the administered districts: "This increase gives reason to expect that eventually big tuskers will be as plentiful as they were fifty years ago."

"I have remarked [he writes] on the rarity of large ivory and would point out that in this regard we are passing through a phase. For generations elephants have been killed for the sake of their tusks; the elephants are long-lived and heavy tusks are the growth of years. It may not be in my lifetime, but the day will come when, under preservation, the old condition of things will be restored."

But, with the spread of farming and the increase of population, is this preservation to be secured for fifty or a hundred years? It may well be doubted. And the growth of the elephant is so slow. In India they say that an elephant is not "a man" till he is fifty years old; and it takes a good bull more than another fifty years before he has attained the full growth of his tusks. It is possible that in the old days elephants may even have attained the stately age of a hundred and fifty years.

Mr Percival bears testimony to the amount of poaching

and smuggling of ivory in these East African regions, and the difficulty of catching marauders. The country is so vast, and can of necessity be only partially policed. The great cloud on the horizon of the game-preserver is, says this author, the fact that under protection all wild animals begin to take liberties, to lose their respect for men, and invade native cultivation. This has happened in the dense bush, near Umtondea, on the coast north of Mombasa. "Things reached such a pitch some years ago that the elephants were outlawed and the natives given rights to destroy the troop. They could not; the density of the bush proved too much even for these hunters." The same thing has happened in recent years in Southern Rhodesia, though there the elephants were mostly destroyed and driven away; also in the Addo Bush, Cape Colony, where a fierce and harried remnant still lingers.

Mr D. D. Lyell, in *The African Elephant and its Hunters*, gives a great deal of valuable information on this subject. A seasoned hunter himself in Northern Rhodesia and Central Africa, his facts and conclusions are well worth the study of the curious on this topic. We fear it must be concluded, from the brief sketch we have been able to give of the present position of the elephant in Africa, that the days of the great bull elephants in East Africa, Uganda and the Nile regions are nearly finished. Considering the persecution they have undergone during the last sixty years it is amazing that any remain at all. Here and there, in distant and still little-explored regions of Central Africa, a few herds still remain unknown. Captain Bell, in his expedition to the Bahr Aouck, discovered one such ivory

" pocket." In Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika elephants are much reduced, but are protected in certain reserves. The hinterlands of Mozambique, French and Belgian Congo, Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone still yield a fair quantity of ivory annually; but these sources of supply are likely to come to an end before many years are over. Despite game reserves and protection, we fear the African elephant is in deep waters. The odds are too much against him. He may endure here and there for a hundred years, perhaps even a hundred and fifty. After that time the place of this wonderful and most mighty beast will, almost certainly, know him no more.

The Asiatic elephant is, as a rule, a much smaller animal than the African. It is still found wild in a few of the forest regions of India and Ceylon, as well as in Assam, Burma, the Malay Peninsula, Siam, Cochin China, Sumatra and Borneo. In India, Burma and Siam these animals have for ages been captured, tamed, and reduced to the service of man. As a rule, the tusks of Asiatic elephants are much smaller than those of the African species; but Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game* shows ten instances where they have been found over the weight of 70 lb. Of these the finest example is a pair of tusks (the Asiatic record), now in the collection of His Majesty the King, which scale 161 and 160 lb. respectively—a very magnificent pair. These came from the vast jungle of the Western Terai. Little ivory is now exported from India; a small quantity comes from Siam, Burma and the Malay Peninsula; but, compared with the huge yield from Africa, the exports from Asia are almost negligible.

Mammoth ivory—sometimes called fossil ivory—has been known to commerce since the days of early Greek civilisation. Much of it is mere rubbish, much of it damaged by exposure; but there yet remains a considerable quantity of teeth which are in fair condition and yield ivory of good quality, not, however, to be compared with the finest kind of African "soft" or even "hard" ivory. The chief deposits lie at the present day in the vast frozen tundras of North-East Siberia. These thaw out very slowly at the edges of rivers and cliffs, where they are gradually exposed to the action of water and sun, and are found by native hunters from time to time. The tundra is frozen to the depth of hundreds of feet, and the vast mammoth deposits can be only very slowly revealed during the next few hundred years. It is much more than probable, therefore, that mammoth ivory will find its way into the world's markets long after the African and Asiatic elephants have vanished from the scene.

It has long been difficult to obtain a reliable account of the mammoth and its ivory. Mr Bassett Digby's excellent book, *The Mammoth and Mammoth-Hunting in North-East Siberia*, yields a great deal of valuable information upon the whole history of a deeply interesting subject. He has been over a great deal of mammoth ground, and has seen for himself the terribly severe and dangerous conditions under which the industry of ivory-getting is carried on in these frozen and far-off lands.

There are various theories as to how the vast numbers of mammoths that once wandered over all these regions passed from existence. But up to the present none seems

to explain how these great creatures came to be overtaken by a sudden death and their remains frozen in, in a kind of cold storage, for thousands of years. Mr Digby's theory is that the complete specimens are those of animals which fell into deep, snow-covered crevasses and so died and were frozen in. The mammoth roamed the earth during various portions of the Pleistocene Period, which it is computed lasted for 400,000 years. It is believed by experts that this period came to an end some 15,000 years ago. These are figures which well assault the imagination.

Mammoths have been found exposed in glaciers as fresh almost as when they lived and breathed. So fresh, in fact, that bears, wolves, foxes, and even human beings, were glad to devour their flesh, as it was gradually exposed. Only twenty of these complete specimens have been discovered in Arctic Siberia during the last two hundred years, some few of which have been rescued with infinite labour and preserved in museums. The richest district for mammoth ivory known at the present day lies among the Siberian islands, where huge teeth are raked up from the sandy beaches.

The mammoth stood some 12 or 13 ft. at the shoulder, and had a thick coat of long dark hair and a dense under coat of reddish brown wool, from 9 to 13 in. in thickness. He carried long and often highly curved tusks. Some of those examined by Mr Bassett Digby in North-East Siberia were between 9 ft. 6 in. and 10 ft. 6 in. in length.

"A few ran 11 ft. and an inch or two. . . . One 11-footer in particular had a skin of beautifully symmetric grain . . . it was mahogany in colour, not a crack in it, sound as the tusk of a freshly killed elephant. . . .

The monster tusk of the lot ran 12 ft. 9 in. It was bright blue and seemed to be a cow tusk."

The biggest mammoth tusk yet recorded is the left one of a huge pair in the Imperial Academy of Sciences, at Petrograd. The right tusk measures 12 ft. 9 in. and weighs 166 lb.; the left one, 13 ft. 7 in. and 185 lb. This came from a skull found in the cliff of the Kolyma river, North-East Siberia.

Alaskan mammoth tusks are usually found on the surface, and not buried in frozen ground or ice as in Siberia. They are consequently much weathered, blackened and split, and so fragile as to break easily into fragments. A pair discovered in 1902, measuring 12 ft. in length and weighing 168 lb. and 172 lb. respectively, were, however, in excellent condition, the ivory being perfectly sound and of good quality. These were found in a glacier, where they had evidently been preserved, as it were, in cold storage. We commend Mr Bassett Digby's lively and very interesting book to all those seeking information upon a curious and little-known subject.

Messrs Hale & Son, the well-known Colonial produce and ivory brokers, of 10 Fenchurch Avenue, E.C., who have been kind enough to supply the writer with much valuable information, have written as follows on the subject of Mammoth Ivory:

"A parcel, mostly of very good quality, has just passed through our hands, which realised all round £15 to £20 per cwt. A good part of it consisted of large teeth, which were in a very good state of preservation. . . . The values to-day of Mammoth Ivory vary from 40s. to £60 per cwt. according to the state of preservation.

We understand that this ivory comes from Siberia, where it is often dug out of the glaciers or else is found lying about. We believe that the former are those which are in the best state of preservation owing to the fact that they have been sealed from the atmospheric conditions."

The imports of ivory into Great Britain from all parts of the world have, as may be expected from the enormous destruction of elephants during the last sixty years, very sensibly declined; but according to the Board of Trade returns as many as 6766 cwt. were imported in 1925, and slightly over 7000 cwt. in each of the two previous years. All things considered, it is amazing that the imports should still amount to such huge figures when one remembers that Africa has been feverishly plundered of its ivory for the better part of a century and that a considerable export from Africa goes direct to the Continent, especially by way of Antwerp. It is, however, to be remembered that London is the world's market for "soft" ivory, the finest and most eagerly sought of all.

The writer has had the privilege of viewing the great London warehouse of Messrs Hale & Son, and has seen there the amazing store of tusks laid out upon the floors. There they lie, those precious pillars of ivory, in hundreds upon hundreds; solid scrivelloes, Egyptian and Abyssinian soft teeth; teeth from Ambriz, Zanzibar, Congo, Lagos, Mozambique, East Africa and Siam; those wonderful pieces of ivory, for which so many a great elephant has died, and to obtain which what risks, what hardships, what crimes, what tortures and sufferings —for many of them were brought to the coast by slavers'

caravans—have been dared, endured and perpetrated. The floor of such a warehouse is in truth a piece of history, torn from the very bowels of Africa. The feverish quest for ivory is, as we have shown, terribly hard upon the elephant, which, in spite of attempted preservation, still marches steadily towards its doom.

NOTE

[1] *Slaves and Ivory*. By Major Henry Darley. Witherby. 1926. *The Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter*. By W. D. M. Bell. *Country Life* Library. 1923. *A Game Ranger's Note Book*. By A. Blayney Percival. Nisbet. 1924. *The African Elephant and its Hunters*. By Dennis D. Lyell. Heath Cranton. 1924. *The Mammoth and Mammoth-Hunting in North-East Siberia*. By Bassett Digby. Witherby. 1926. *Rowland Ward's Records of Big Game*. By J. G. Dollman and J. B. Burlace. 1922.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Trout-Fishing in Norway

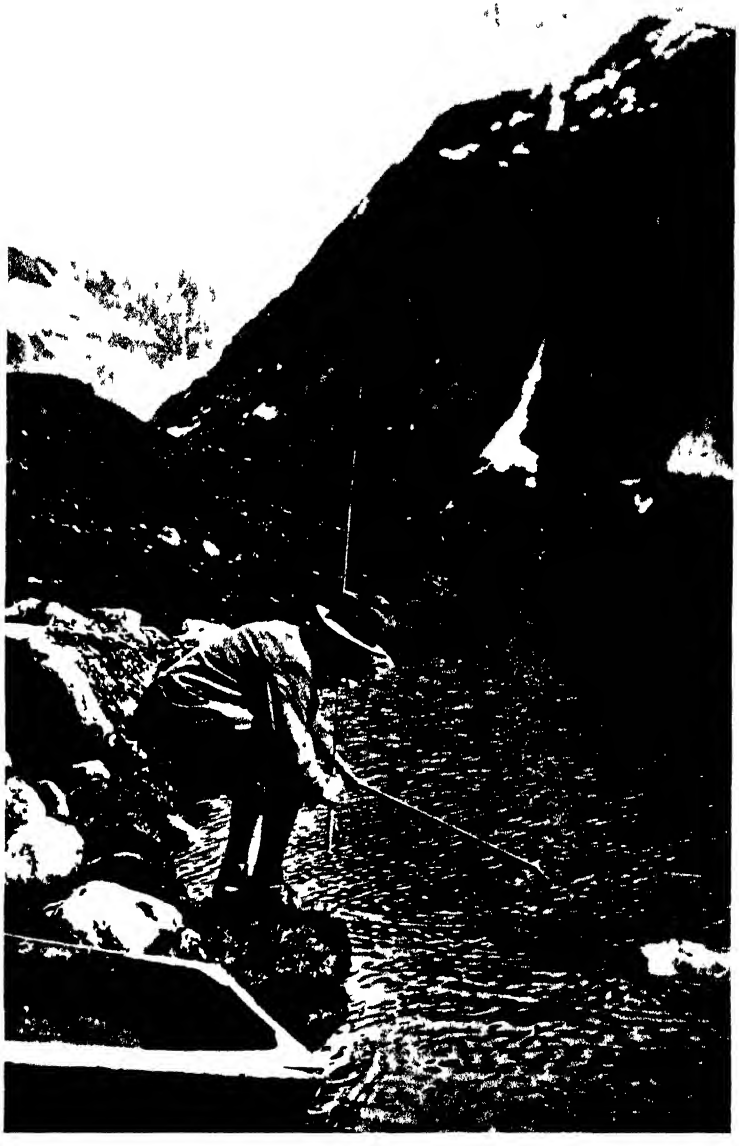
IN England, and even in Scotland, in these days, trout-fishing is not what it used to be. There are now too many people in these islands, and a considerable proportion of them want to fish. Good free trouting, which fifty years ago was easily attainable, is almost a thing of the past. There are too many rods at work, and eager fishers have increased five-hundredfold. Good preserved trout-fishing is an expensive luxury, suited only to the purses of fairly wealthy folk; and the cost of a rod on those clear streams sacred to the dry-fly expert is seldom less than fifty pounds for the season, even on the quiet, lovely and fairly remote streams of Wiltshire. Where, then, is the humbler type of trout-fisher to betake himself? I say, confidently, to Norway, where living is reasonably cheap in the quieter places, English is freely spoken, and lakes abounding in trout are scattered by the hundred over one of the most beautiful countries in the world.

When first I cast a fly in that delightful land I betook myself with a friend to the neighbourhood of the Hardanger Fjord. This is a favourite district for tourists, and the roads and chief hotels are often filled with passengers from touring steamers, going overland from one part of the various fjords to another. But, except very occasionally, when you are shifting quarters, there

is small occasion to be troubled by these people. They are easily avoided, and there are plenty of peaceful fishing-places and quiet hotels where you can take your pleasure, enjoy the glorious scenery and the wonderful wild flowers, and fill your basket with goodly trout.

We first directed our steps from Bergen to Opheim's Vand—vand is Norsk for lake—a beautiful water lying between Vossevangen and Gudvangen on the Naerofjord. It was the 7th of June, early in the season, and we had the comfortable timbered Framnæs hotel to ourselves. Our first evening on the lake yielded nine trout, going three to the pound—the largest ¾ lb.; but my companion was a novice, had never thrown a fly before, and I had to do everything for him as well as for myself, and instruct him in the art. Evening fishing in Norway is perfect, the light never really fades; you can see to read a book till twelve-thirty, soon after which the light of another day is approaching! We went to bed at midnight, and a rich glow remained in the north-east where the sun lay.

Our second evening's sport, after a very hot day, yielded eighteen nice trout, many of them over half-a-pound. The best day we had at Opheim's Vand was on 11th June, when we captured twenty-six trout, the heaviest, taken with a brown phantom minnow, scaling 1¼ lb. I should say here that I never killed a heavier trout in Norway than 3½ lb.; but in some of the bigger and deeper lakes, notably at Red, on Bredheim's Vand, Nordfjord, the heavy lake-trout run to great weights, sometimes even exceeding 12 and 14 lb. These are, of course, similar monsters to what we in Britain know as *Salmo ferox*, which I take to be no more than a very old



TROUTING IN NORWAY BJORNDAL VAND

BJORNDAL VAND IS A HIGH MOUNTAIN LAKE NEAR THE VAST SNOW AND ICE FIELD OF THE FOLGEFOND IN THE HARDANGER FJORD DISTRICT OF NORWAY IT HOLDS SOME VERY LARGE TROUT WHICH FIGHT WITH IMMENSE VIGOUR AND YIELD GREAT SPORT

lake-trout. A pleasant party, consisting of two English parsons and their ladies, had meantime arrived to fish and add to our cheerfulness. I went with one of these clergymen, a skilled angler, to try a high lake, called Helgeset Vand, seven miles away up in the mountains. To reach it we had a tough and rather boggy walk, and crossed a good deal of snow. We found ice still half-covering the small lake, and putting our rods together, and our flies on, we started casting from either side of the vand near the far end, where a small waterfall poured into the lake. It was really too early to expect much sport. I had slightly the best of the luck, taking eight fair fish, mostly half-pounders, while my companion, although the better fisherman, accounted for only two or three. All these trout were thin and weak, and those I took, if in good condition, would have been much nearer a pound each than half-a-pound. This was on 12th June. It is not the least use fishing these higher waters in Norway until the lakes are free of ice, the snow has vanished, and the trout have had time to find food and attain condition. From one of these excellent parsons I heard an amusing fishing yarn, which has the merit of being a true one. A certain old Shropshire squire had some very fine trout-water, of which he was extremely proud and somewhat chary of granting permission to fish. A neighbouring curate, who was devoted to fishing but a somewhat greedy sportsman, after some time obtained the coveted permit. He got up very early, fished hard and long on a good day when trout were rising well, and made a very large—in fact, a quite unnecessarily large—bag. As he returned triumphant from the scene of his labours he met the

squire's keeper, who asked him civilly how he had fared, and said he would like to see his basket. The curate could hardly refuse, and a little later the keeper reported the matter to his master, who was much annoyed at the way his water had been punished. A year or two later a living in the gift of the old squire became vacant. Among other applicants the fishing curate sent in his name and testimonials. He received in reply a signed postcard only, on which these ominous words were written: "Sir, I would sooner give my living to a cormorant!"

On 13th June, fishing in the morning on Opheim's Vand, with one of the padres, with a pleasant breeze from the north-west, we had twenty-five fair trout between us. In the evening my fishing friend and I got a dozen more, including a very good trout of 1½ lb., which I got with the brown phantom minnow. The two parsons also did fairly well, and the total bag for the day was seventy-five fish—quite good for so early in the summer.

We now shifted our quarters and betook ourselves to a pleasant place known as Vikingnæs, situated at the narrowest part of the Hardanger Fjord. At that time some Norwegian folk ran a quiet private hotel there, usually frequented by a few English people. Close to the main building were two or three of the old Norsk timber huts—*Rogstuurs* they call them—built of heavy timber, thatched with birch-bark and turf-sods, and wonderfully cool in summer as well as warm in winter. These served as bedrooms, and my comrade and I were fortunate enough to secure one, a fine roomy abode, measuring twenty-four by twenty-two feet, where all our

luggage and fishing-tackle could be comfortably bestowed. The situation of Vikingnæs was delightful. Beyond and behind the little clearing where the hotel stood lay far-spreading forest of oak, birch, juniper and pine. Four excellent fishing-lakes were within a couple of miles or so: one of them, Eide Vand, a mile and a half in length, the others circular and smaller and hemmed in by woodland. We had a small wooden pier, and local steamers plying up and down the Hardanger called two or three times a week. Eider-duck and their young were often seen, and moderately good sea-fishing for codling and other varieties was to be had just below the house. Beyond us stretched the lovely fjord, and everywhere around rose great mountains, with the snowy heights of the magnificent Folgefond glacier ten miles away. Since the war the Vikingnæs establishment has been abandoned, and the little clearing has, I hear, gone back to primeval forest again—a thousand pities.

In this delightful spot we found some pleasant English people who came there every summer and enjoyed one of the most restful of retreats. The little establishment was very well run, and we were admirably looked after. The first evening of our arrival at this pleasant place my comrade and I set off for Eide Vand, the largest of the four lakes I have spoken of. With us went a Norsk lad, named Lauritz, who was attached to the hotel and looked after the boats and the fishing. He spoke some English and easily understood all we said or wanted. He was an expert rower, fisherman and trapper, and added to his small means by trapping animals, such as mink, otter and fox, and various eagles and other raptorial birds, for the destruction of which rewards were

paid by the Norwegian Government. After a delightful walk of two and a half miles through the woods, that beautiful flower *Linnea borealis* everywhere starring the earth, and with occasional glimpses of the fjord, we reached the vand, an exquisite sheet of water, set amid forest with a mountain background. Many lovely lakes have I seen and fished in Norway, but few exceeding in beauty this peerless water. It was a wonderful evening, a soft breeze blew from the south-west, and, as it turned out, the trouting was first-rate.

My comrade had not yet acquired expertness in adjusting his flies to his cast, and as usual I did the business for him. I used black-and-silver, green-and-teal and claret-and-grouse for myself, and for my comrade the like patterns, with a "Zulu" instead of the black-and-silver. I have always found the claret-and-grouse a most favoured fly wherever I have fished in Norway. The "butcher," "blue upright" and "coch-y-bondhu" are also good patterns. Norsk lake-trout like biggish flies, of sea-trout size. Lauritz managed the boat perfectly, and we slowly made our way to the far end of the lake. The Eide Vand trout were excellent specimens, and nearly always, as we found them on this summer evening, very lively and sporting, all of them well-fed, lusty, handsome fish. They averaged nearly half-a-pound, and pretty often we got three-quarter-pounders, and occasionally over. That evening, between 8.30 and 11.15 P.M., I landed twenty good fish, the biggest 1½ lb., while my comrade did very well for a novice, capturing a dozen, the heaviest just 1 lb. As we walked home at 11.30 P.M., full of contentment, through the forest and the balmy night, it was still quite light,

while in the north-eastern sky the golden hue showed that the sun was preparing to create day once more.

Next afternoon, 16th June, after a hot day, we set out towards 5 P.M. to try the the three small lakes on the Kalthveit side. Three and a half miles through the forest brought us to our destination, after passing two or three Norsk farmsteads, set amidst a grassy clearing, with patches of corn- and potato-land. Tall mountains still streaked with snow rose in the background. The first lake, a small one like its fellow beyond, lay in a setting of dark pine-forest. Getting into a boat we at once set to work. We took here a few smallish fish and one three-quarter-pounder, which I captured with the phantom minnow. Going on to the next lake we found better sport, taking between us, by 9.30 P.M., twenty good trout, of which my largest scaled just 1½ lb. My comrade's best fish went 1¼ lb. In this circular lake, which had a peaty bottom, the fish were beautiful specimens, very dark, brilliantly spotted, with rich golden stomachs. We saw some eider-duck, which are common in Hardanger, at a small arm of the fjord as we came home, and a tall heron flapped away majestically before us as we disturbed him. Our twenty-four trout taken this evening averaged just under ¾ lb. each—a very good catch for this district. Vikingnæs—*næs* means a nose or promontory, the equivalent of our English ness, or naze —is famous for its Viking graves, which lie scattered about the coastline. These consist of huge mounds of stone, piled together in the wild and stormy days of the fierce Norsemen, who from these shores raided Europe. Some friends staying at the hotel opened with much labour one of these graves. It had been ransacked long

before, but they found in a stone cist a brooch which they afterwards took to the British Museum. Curiously enough it was by the authorities there declared to be of old English make, and had no doubt been raided from the land of the Angles and Saxons by the Norsk pirates. The name Viking, by the way, has nothing to do with our word "king," but signifies merely people who dwelt in *viks*, or small settlements—villages. The same word is, of course, common in English place-names, as, for instance, Chiswick, Painswick, etc.

On the 28th, after a wet and stormy night, we walked to Eide Vand after breakfast, and again had capital sport. A glorious morning after the storm, a delightful breeze with no chill in it, a gleamy day with wonderful interplay of light and shade over mountain, fjord and lake, and trout everywhere rising freely. In the distance, down the fjord, the great island of Varaldsö rose magnificent, showing deep blue against the horizon. Everywhere the verdure was vivid after the rain, and the wild pansies bloomed in profusion, as they do all over Norway at this season. We captured forty-five trout and enjoyed ourselves to our heart's content, on one of the most perfect days I ever remember in that fair country.

Our next venture, 21st June, was made to Thorsnæs Sæter, a place high up on the mountain across the fjord, where in a few summer-huts the women were herding their cows and goats and making their annual store of cheeses. Here they are alone with nature, their men climbing up to them each week-end with necessary supplies. Lauritz, our invaluable boy, of course went with us, and we carried our blankets and details, including a kettle and frying-pan. The fjord here is only two

or three miles across, and with alternate rowing and sailing we were soon at Thorsnæs, where stands an old stone farmhouse inhabited by the family of Galtung. On the front wall of this house was carved an ancient coat of arms—a very unusual thing in Norway—with the crest of a pig. The Galtungs, although they are only farmers, are a family of long descent. The legend—I believe well founded—in connection with their coat of arms is this. In the days of Gustavus Vasa, that famous king was, in the early part of the sixteenth century, in flight from his enemies and found refuge with the Galtungs, one of whom took him across the fjord in his boat, wrapped in sacking, and lying amid other farming gear, including the carcasses of some pigs. They were stopped by some enemies in mid-fjord, but on Galtung declaring that he had no news, that the half-concealed bundles of sacking contained nothing but pigs' carcasses, and that he was only moving some farm-stuff, he was allowed to proceed. For thus saving his life Gustavus Vasa, as a mark of his gratitude, granted a coat of arms with the quaint porcine crest to the farmer and his family.

We met Galtung, the descendant of this ancient family, as we passed the house, and had a chat with him. Then began our upward climb to the lake. It was a very hot afternoon and we sweated freely, as we carried our blankets and paraphernalia on our backs. A climb of rather more than 1000 feet brought us to the lake, where we found a boat, put our rods together, and fished down the three-mile vand, which lies in a deep mountain valley known as Glomdal. It was a coldish evening, with a not too promising north wind. Nevertheless, we did

fairly well, taking sixteen good fish, the largest scaling 2 lb., captured on the brown phantom minnow. This was a plucky fish, which fought well and leaped two feet out of the water before being brought to the boat. Other nice trout were one of 1¼ lb., a pounder, and several of ½ lb. We landed at 9.45 P.M., got our things to a primitive *sæter* hut, fried some fish, made some tea, and enjoyed a good supper, eked out with excellent *blæber* jam and cream. We saw and spoke to some of the pleasant *sæter* women, still busy with their work. They had sixteen huts at this place, and looked after one hundred cows and some goats. Still higher up the mountain lie two more lakes, but these were not yet fit to be fished. We noticed here ravens, various hawks and buzzards, ring-ousels, wagtails, the inevitable pair of divers and their young, and some wading-birds.

Next morning, after ablutions in a stream at hand, we breakfasted at 7.30 A.M. There was again, at these heights, a coldish breeze from the north-west. We fished half-way up the vand again, taking sixteen good trout, the largest 1¼ lb., several pounders, and the rest averaging ½ lb. Returning to the *sæter* we lunched, packed our belongings into the boat, and rowed up to the top, taking only five more fish on the way. Descending to the Hardanger we were again in a hot climate; the fjord was as smooth as glass, and we rowed easily across to our pleasant quarters at Vikingnæs. Our total catch of trout at Thorsnæs Sæter was thirty-seven good trout—quite as many as we expected thus early in the season.

On 23rd June we had a telephone call from Thorbjorn, the farmer at Ljörnæs, a hamlet three miles away, telling us that a wedding was to take place that morning

at Strandebarm, a village in the neighbouring bay, and that the procession would leave Kalthveit at 11 A.M. We sent round our fishing-tackle and lunch by boat and walked to Ljörnæs. It was nearly one o'clock before the procession came along. First appeared a man in the usual blue-serge, home-manufactured Norsk suit—the women still used spinning-wheels and looms in this district—and a black, wideawake, soft hat, playing with much vigour the curious Norwegian fiddle. Then the bridegroom, in similar attire, and the bride, a pretty fair girl, her head surmounted by the high ancient Hardanger wedding-crown of silver decorated with coloured glass. Her dress was the usual Hardanger costume: red bodice edged with the curious ribbon characteristic of the Hardanger, dark skirt, white embroidered apron, and full, white lawn sleeves. Long coloured ribbons streamed down her back, mingling with the two thick plaits of her fair hair. With her lofty crown, fresh complexion and beautiful hair, this charming girl looked truly a queen. Sometimes a bowl of milk, signifying plenty, is carried in front of the bridal pair, but on this occasion the ancient custom was omitted. A number of men and women followed, the women carrying their Hardanger costumes in quaint Norsk carved and painted boxes; these costumes were to be donned on their arrival by rowing-boat at the beach at Strandebarm.

After the procession had passed us we lunched, and then adjourned to the neighbouring Kalthveit Vands and fished. The trout were not rising well, and after capturing eight we dragged the boat through 100 yards of bush—a rather tough and muddy scramble—and

launched her on a charming little circular lake known as Rürvik Vand, perched high above the fjord, with glorious views, and tried our luck there. Here we found an extraordinary change. The trout of Rürvik are very light in colour, very active, and all fought like furies. For their size I never saw such determined pugilists. When hooked they leaped high out of the water and often kicked themselves clear. I lost one really heavy fish in this manner. In a short time we took here fourteen excellent trout, the heaviest a shade over 1 lb. At 7 o'clock we rowed home, and supped at 8 P.M. It was the Eve of St John, a night of great tradition in Norway, the survival of the "Balderfest" of the Norsk pagans. Everywhere up and down the long length of Hardanger Fjord great fires were lighted, on shore and isle and headland. Old and decayed boats are often burned whole or broken up to feed the flames, as on this occasion. At 10.30 P.M. we had a big fire at Vikingnæs, drank *skall* in quaint old Norwegian wooden bowls, and watched the fires blazing down the fjord.

On the 24th we again fished the Kalthveit Vands in the evening, and did very well, landing twenty-six good trout, several of them running to 1 lb. in weight. Next morning we quitted Vikingnæs with infinite regret, and after various wanderings found our way to Eide, on the Gravensfjord, the narrowest of the arms of the Hardanger. From there we made our way on the following morning by a mountain walk of seven miles to Espeland's Vand, a very beautiful lake lying between Eide and Ulvik. A feature of this lovely vand is the fine waterfall pouring from the heights of the north bank headlong into the lake. High snow-topped mountains and dark pine-

forests lay in the background. After a very hot walk we found a boat and boy, and fished this charming lake with fair success, taking thirty-one nice trout, all in good condition. On 6th July, walking up from Ulvik in intense heat in the afternoon, we had not much time left for fishing, but secured eight trout, all of fair size, notwithstanding a dead calm. In Norway, so brisk and obliging are the trout, you can, fishing with a dry fly, manage to kill fish even on such inauspicious occasions.

Next morning was again intensely hot, with a flat calm, and we did little. We bathed and had a slack time, and a good breeze presently springing up about noon we did well. There was a good rise, and we took thirty-seven nice trout by 4 P.M., the heaviest just over 1 lb. We then went ashore, packed our few belongings and walked down to Ulvik, passing a *sæter* on the way and getting a drink of milk from a good-looking Norsk girl. Round Ulvik the scant Norwegian hay harvest was now in full swing, and the fjord sides were sprinkled with the tall light hurdles on which the farmers dry their little crops. It was delightful to see hundreds of fieldfares, which nest so freely in Scandinavia, busy among the meadows.

From Ulvik we went on by fjord steamer to Norheimsund, one of the most beautiful spots even on the lovely Hardanger, nowadays rather too much frequented by the ubiquitous tourist. From there we visited a good trout-lake known as Langsvand, away up in the mountains, a wild moorland water with a few *sæter* huts near by. The morning was again hot and glaring, but we got afloat and managed to get a few fish with the phantom minnow. After a bathe and lunch a kindly breeze once more came to our assistance, and we did fairly well with

the fly, our total bag reaching twenty-seven good fish, the heaviest 1¼ lb., with a few pounders and some three-quarter-pounders. The good *sæter* people, as usual, supplied us with milk, and we jogged downhill contentedly to our supper at the hotel.

Evening at Norheimsund is wonderful. From there you obtain a marvellous view of the vast Folgefond ice-field, clothed in eternal snow, which throughout the long night hours is suffused with rose-colour. Norheimsund was, however, too busy a place for us, and we returned by steamer to Vikingnæs, where we had again plenty of quiet sport before us. Again we visited Thorsnæs *sæter* and had good fishing, the first evening yielding thirty-four good trout and the next morning thirty-two.

Our total bag during the trip realised 501 trout, not one of which was wasted. It is to be remembered, however, that my comrade was a complete novice and that for a great part of the trip I had to spend much of my time in assisting him. If I had had an expert fisherman with me I have no doubt we should have basketed 800 trout between us. On other occasions in Norway, in less-frequented places, I have experienced even better sport. On one memorable day an angling friend and myself took 117 trout in little over two hours' fishing. In all these excursions only once have I been asked to pay for the fishing; that was at Eide, where Mr Maelands, the hotel proprietor, had kindly arranged with the owner of two lakes among the mountains, whither we took our way. The fee was, I think, 2½ kroner (about 2s. 6d.) per rod, not a very alarming item for a day of good sport. Everywhere else that I have fished in that beautiful and most picturesque country the

trouting has been entirely free. Moreover, the kindness and the friendly welcome everywhere extended by the simple and unspoiled Norsk people to the man or woman of British blood is an asset which can never be over-estimated. The great thing to be remembered by the trout-fisher in Norway is to fish from the middle of June to the end of July, and to keep always away from the few beaten tracks of the inevitable tourist. This is not a difficult matter.

CHAPTER NINE

Sea-Fishing at the Cape of Good Hope

NO sea-waters in the world are so bountifully provided with fish as those found at the Cape of Good Hope and along the southern littoral of Cape Colony. Of this abundance you cannot have better evidence than the enormous numbers of cormorants, locally known as *duykers* (divers), which are to be seen in tens of thousands and yet, despite their voracity, make not the smallest visible impression on the inexhaustible supply of marine fish at their disposal. At times you may see a dark line of Cape Cormorants—*Trek Duykers*, as the Dutch call them—stretching from Kalk Bay to Simon's Town for three or four miles, in a dense mass 200 yards in width. When the docks at Cape Town are occasionally emptied, as they have to be, the fish, and how to dispose of them, are a serious question. From one small dock, for example, no less than 100 tons of fish have had to be carried away! It may therefore be understood that anyone interested in sea-fishing, whether from a boat or from the shore, can have a glorious time in pursuit of the innumerable fish, of many species and wonderfully varied hues, to be found and easily lured in those waters.

The best-known sea-fish at the Cape yielding sport to the angler with rod and hand-line are Snoek, Steenbras, Kabeljauw, Rooi Stompneus, Hottentots, Romans,

Albicore, Elft Visch, Bamboo Fish, Seventy-four, Poeskop, King Klipvisch, Klipvisch, Hangeberger, Jacob Evertsen, Katunker, Stokvisch, Geelbek, Springer and Harder (mullet), Grey and Red Gurnard, Windtoy, Baard-Mannatje and Pompelmoesje. Most of these are, as the reader will at once note, strange old Dutch names, bestowed upon the Cape fishes when the Dutch settlers first tried their merits more than two hundred and fifty years ago. Jacob Evertsen, for example, was named after a Dutch admiral, famous in the days of Van Tromp and Ruyter, who was notable for his red face and projecting eyes.

Of these, many are powerful fishes, which yield excellent sport to the angler. Kabeljauw, for instance—sometimes called from their shape Cape Salmon, though they have no further pretence to the high merits of that noble fish—run up to 30 and 40 lb. weight; they yield long and swift rushes and fight with great determination. A really fine sporting fish. It should be remarked here that few of the Cape fish equal in table-value the excellent denizens of our northern seas. None of the fish of warm climates seem to do so. But some few of the Cape fishes are excellent eating, notably the lovely Roman (caught in False Bay), Sancord (a winter fish), Poeskop, Jacob Evertsen, Rooi Stompneus, Seventy-four, Windtoy, King Klipvisch, Baard-Mannatje (little bearded man), a summer visitant, and Stokvisch, a kind of hake. Kabeljauw, Rooi Steenbras, Geelbek, and others, are salted like cod and exported to Mauritius and elsewhere. Others again are "pickle-fish," and are much appreciated by up-country Dutch folk in South Africa. Among these are to be noted Hangeberger, Stompneus,

Blue Steenbras and shad. Excellent soles, though not quite so good as an English "Dover" sole, are netted in sandy parts of the sea-line, especially at Algoa Bay.

Another excellent sporting fish is the Geelbek (yellow nose), notable for its silvery body and gamboge-tinted throat and palate. These fish run up to 40 lb. weight, and if you encounter them late on a glorious afternoon in False Bay, east of Cape Town, you will surely have some brisk sport. On the Table Bay or Atlantic side, where the sea is perceptibly cooler than in False Bay—the Indian Ocean side—these fish seem to feed freely all day, especially at Houts Bay. The Geelbek is a very hard fighter, and often yields a stiff battle of twenty minutes before he can be gaffed. Another determined fighter is the heavy Steenbras, which occasionally runs to a weight of 70 lb. He has not the dash and fire of the Kabeljauw, with its long fierce rushes of fifty yards, but bores deep down to the rocks, whence he can be extracted, with due patience, after a struggle of perhaps an hour in length.

Snoek, a fierce-biting fish, armed with a very formidable mouthful of teeth and a nasty sharp dorsal fin, reputed poisonous by Cape fishermen, is best captured by the curious method of the Malays. The hook has no barb, but is very sharp, five inches long and two inches across the bend. To the eye of this hook is attached softened-steel wire; and strung on to the wire, and resting upon a pear-shaped fourteen-ounce lead, is a piece of sharkskin cut into ten or eleven strips, so attached to the wire as to form a kind of tassel, which with the pear-shaped lead gives in the water some resemblance to a small octopus. This at least seems to be the impression

of European fishers. A wire trace and ten fathoms of waterproof-line form the rest of the outfit. The Cape fisherman's method is to cast his bait a little ahead of his boat, moving at about three miles an hour, and from a depth of twenty feet haul in with a slow jerking motion. When a shoal of these fish are encountered the snoek, which is an extremely fierce biter, yields some truly exciting sport. Three or four fishermen in the boat, out of a crew of perhaps five, will be hard at work hauling in their captures simultaneously. The method is very curious. Each man, who wears a khaki tunic or stout waterproof for the business, as he hauls up his fish—probably running from 8 lb. to 10 lb.—turns his back on the snoek as he gets it to the gunwale, draws it deftly under his left arm, disengages the hook and, having cast out his line, gently puts down the fish, which is tender-fleshed, and knocks it on the head with a club. The fun when a shoal is encountered is fast and furious. This is not seldom, for the snoek is a very plentiful fish in the Cape seas, and for six months of the year yields large catches. Snoek are in great demand at the Cape as pickled or salted fish, and there are various factories along the coastline. Few methods of sea-fishing at the Cape have the risks of the heavily armed snoek, a fish which snaps as freely out of the water as in.

An excellent fish is the "Seventy-four"—origin of name unknown, possibly called after the old 74-gun battleship, for he is a hardy fighter. He is an excellent sporting fish, running up to 25 lb. and as game as a pebble. He is a capital eating fish too, and well worth landing. He is found more usually east of Cape Town,

on the Indian Ocean side, from False Bay to Natal. A sea-perch or bass, his scientific name is *Dentex rupestris*. He is a shapely fish, silvery in hue, with large scales.

The Rooi Stompneus, a big, burly, heavy-shouldered fish, gaily coloured in pink and silver, is often encountered. He is a heavy, boring fighter, running up to 15 lb. in weight, and is highly esteemed as a table fish at the Cape.

Those who do not care to go to the expense of a boat manned by two or three Malays will find plenty of excellent sport fishing from the rocks or jetties. For these large numbers of fish of many varieties, running from 1 lb. to 10 lb. in weight, are always ready and willing to answer the rodsman's invitation. Hottentots, Bamboo Fish, Harders and Springers (both a kind of mullet), Klipvisch, a Blenny (small, but excellent eating), King Klipvisch (one of the best of all South African table fish), Galleons, Dassies, Silver Fish, Pompelmoesje, Steenvisch or Steenjes, occasional Romans (the most delicious fish at the Cape), Elfts, and various others, are plentiful, and the angler can almost invariably be assured of a considerable bag. On the rocky shores so frequent along the South African littoral, the Kreeft, or Cape Crayfish, which swarms in many places, is often a great nuisance, seizing as it does the bait offered for other and worthier fish. Nevertheless the Kreeft has its uses. It runs to the size of a large lobster, and is quite good eating, and its tail furnishes one of the best baits possible for rock-fishing. Canneries for these crustaceans have now for some years been established at the Cape, yielding, I believe, very satisfactory results. Other baits are pieces of Steenje, or silver fish, prawns, shrimps, and

a kind of sea-louse, a curious crustacean something like a headless prawn. Pieces of meat, raw or cooked, are also occasionally used, as are portions of the arm of a squid or octopus, and mussels. Among other lures, a silver spoon or a monstrous feathered fly of many hues are often successful. When trying for heavy fish, stout lines and hooks and wire traces are necessary.

Sea-fishing at the Cape, as an industry, is almost entirely in the hands of the Malays, who are expert boatmen and fishermen. The Malay, introduced from the Dutch East Indies, have been in South Africa for something like two hundred years, and it is estimated that at least 3000 of them are now occupied in the Cape fisheries. If you want to enjoy a delightful day of sport and pleasure, in a glorious climate and amid some of the most exquisite scenery in the world, you may be advised to go and stay at Muizenberg or Kalk Bay, an hour from Cape Town by rail, and there charter a whale-boat, manned by two or three Malays, most of whom speak Dutch and English, and go out with them for a day's fishing in False Bay. You may take a motor-boat, if you like, but sailing is very enjoyable, and the Malays are scarcely to be surpassed as boatmen even by Orkney men or Shetlanders. Hand-lines and baits will, of course, be provided, but you will probably take your own sea-rod and tackle for the sport in front of you.

One of the many good days enjoyed by the writer with these excellent Malay fishermen may serve as a sample of what the travelling Briton may expect in Kalk Bay and Simon's Bay, inlets of that huge and

picturesque indentation known as False Bay lying to the east of the Cape Peninsula. Boarding our whale-boat at Kalk Bay, we made first for the famous Roman Rock, where the magnificent fish known as Romans are usually to be encountered. We were not long before we were busy—three of us, including a Malay, using long hand-lines, to each of which were attached three hooks baited with pieces of fresh Steenje, while the fourth wielded a rod. Romans run from 3 lb. or 4 lb. to 20 lb. in weight. This morning we were soon playing and hauling up specimens ranging from 3 lb. to 9 lb. Fresh out of the sea, there is no more lovely fish than a Roman (*Chrisophrys cristiceps*), with his wonderful hue of golden vermilion. The fish are perch-like in shape, and carry sharp, white, ivory-like teeth, some of which project from the mouth. We had great fun with these excellent fellows, which are the most delicious of Cape sea-fish, and in the space of an hour or two had thirty lying at the bottom of the boat. During these proceedings we landed also some Rooi Stompneus, heavy-shouldered fish of 8 lb. or 10 lb. which required humouring, and came out of the water clumsy but gleaming masses of pink and silver. Presently our friend with the rod hooked what seemed like a real monster of the deep, a dull, heavy, boring fish, which headed always for the bottom and was often difficult to move at all. After much earnest persuasion from a stout sea-rod and strong tackle, and the space of forty minutes, a 38 lb. Steenbras was brought to the boat-side, gaffed, and duly hauled in and knocked on the head. This was a big fellow enough, green, blue and purple of hue, and we contemplated his bulky form with much satisfaction.

They will occasionally run to much greater weights, and are notable captures.

Among other fish taken at this anchorage also were Hottentots (*Sargus capensis*), a smallish brown fish; Klipvisch (*Blennius versicolor*), a good eating fish; Steenje, and King Klipvisch (*Xiphiurus capensis*), one of the best of the Cape edible fishes. By this time the bottom of the whale-boat was becoming fairly covered with a most gay and varied assortment of colour. If the South African fishes cannot vie for the table with those of our northern waters their wonderful hues are always a surprise and pleasure to the eye.

The fishing after this went off for a space, and we hoisted sail and moved off for Simon's Bay, where lies the Cape Naval Station. Here sport grew brisk again. We captured large numbers of silver fish (*Dentex argyrozona*), a shapely, whiting-like fish of silvery hue, which swarms in huge numbers in the Cape seas, and is largely eaten. Then on to other grounds, where we got some biggish Stompneus, Seventy-fours (of 8 lb. to 10 lb. weight), more silver fish, Katunkers and Geelbek, yielding great sport, "Romans" and an Albicore or two. These latter are sturdy fighters, and as they come over the boat-side, showing their vivid rainbow hues, are very welcome trophies for the sea-angler. They are allied to the mackerels, and near cousins of the tunny and bonito; they belong to the genus *Thynnus*, and come into the Cape seas only occasionally, in pursuit of silver fish and other marine prey. They are fierce and voracious feeders, are beautifully shaped, and manifestly built for speed, on yacht-like lines.

So passed a most pleasantly exciting day, with such

a sufficiency of sport as to render us towards evening sated with our work and our arms feeling the effects of hard sea-toil. Always during that delightful day were we surrounded by the most glorious scenery, some of the finest in the whole wide world. Far away eastward, across the blue bay, loomed the mainland, the distant Stellenbosch Sierras, and the mountains of Hottentots' Holland, terminating in the fine rugged outline of Cape Hangklip, jutting far out to meet the Indian Ocean. Nearer to us rose the rugged backbone of hills which runs down to Cape Point, the heights of Muizenberg, and beyond them again the pleasant slopes of Wynberg. As evening fell, the landscape was mantled with the wondrous flush of the African sunset, and the distance presently changed to purples, warm browns and deep indigo. Surely never did sea-anglers pursue their craft amid more lovely scenes or under such charm of sky and ocean. The day had as usual been fair from earliest dawn; the sun shone always overhead; the sapphire sea was smooth, and the heat chastened by a soft and refreshing breeze. We went ashore reluctantly, gazing once more on what looked like a miraculous draught of fishes, nearly a third of a boat-load in all. Some of the best were set aside for our own consumption, the rest we handed over to our Malay friends who had done so well for us all day.

Such days are plentiful enough in this most fair region of South Africa; yet there are occasional reminders that the Cape of Storms, as the Portuguese named it when they first entered these seas, is not always blessed with fine weather. When the fierce south-easter blows, and blows hard, red dust is abundant

everywhere, and the cloud of "Table Cloth" hangs over Table Mountain, and you may be reminded for a day or two that even this glorious country has its seamy side. These outbursts are not, however, of long endurance. The weather clears again, the "Table Cloth" vanishes from the heights of the great mountain, and again the fine climate and the wonderful scenery are there to persuade the visitor that there are few places like the Cape Peninsula for pleasure and the joy of life.

Excellent sea-fishing is to be found from Cape Town all along the littoral of Cape Colony as far as St John's River, and thence up the Kaffraria and Natal coastline.

Cape Colony, hitherto far too much neglected by the English tourist and sea-fisher, deserves, in truth, to be much better known than it is at present. In the old days, when communications were certainly difficult and accommodation very primitive, one can understand that the traveller from England was not sufficiently catered for or attracted. Now, however, with excellent communication by road and rail, plenty of motor-cars at hand, fair hotels and lodgings, travellers find themselves in comfortable surroundings and assured of a hearty welcome. Everywhere the scenery is magnificent, Nature at her best and bravest, and the wealth of birds and wild flowers astonishing. There is no necessity to refer the sea-angler to particular spots in this favoured country. I have given a sample of the sport to be found at the Cape itself. Travelling leisurely along the southern portion of Cape Colony, say from Caledon to Mossel Bay, George, Knysna, Port Elizabeth, East London, Port Alfred and St John's River, fishermen

will find plenty of delightful spots where, either from the boat, or from piers, or the rocky shore-line, he can obtain fine sport with rod and line. Here and there he may find pleasant and wonderful surprises even for the skilled and seasoned marine-angler. To give an example, some years ago at Port St John, that most picturesque harbour in Eastern Cape Colony, three men were fishing from a boat on the St John's River. One of them was using a salmon-rod and hooked a turtle, which after three-quarters of an hour of desperate struggle was gaffed and hauled into the boat. He scaled 200 lb., and was certainly a notable capture. This is fact and not fiction. Africa, in truth, has always something new to present, as Pliny long since remarked; and this holds good even for the sea-fisherman.

CHAPTER TEN

Polecats, Stoats & Weasels

FIFTY years ago polecats were still fairly common in many parts of the kingdom. They have been steadily reduced in numbers, mainly in the interests of game-preserving, and are now to be regarded as rare, except in the wilder parts of Wales and a few other districts. This animal was at one time well known in the Fen country, and in 1902 a correspondent of *The Field* reported it in the neighbourhood of Littleport and Burnt Fen. It is still occasionally heard of in the vicinity of Wicken Fen, and elsewhere. In 1906 it was still reported from Essex, and I believe the animal is even now occasionally heard of in the wilder and more remote parts of that county. Polecats still exist also in the West of England, in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.

Six years ago a keeper in Radnorshire noticed that his hens were in a great state of alarm, and found traces of young pheasant killing. He set a trap, and in six days caught five full-grown polecats. Although these creatures are occasionally found in traps, they are so shy and secretive in their habits that they are seldom seen. There are, of course, rare exceptions. In 1902 a correspondent reported to *The Field* the following incident from Cardiganshire. A keeper, a short time previously, saw coming towards him, along a path, in rough grass, a dark, waving line. Stepping behind a tree

he saw seven polecats approaching. He then barred their advance, and striking about him killed six, the survivor making its escape. On this estate thirty-one of these animals were trapped in two years.

Polecats are most fierce and courageous animals, and on occasion will even attack human beings—as, indeed, will stoats and weasels when hunting in family parties. In 1903 a case, reported in *The Field*, showed that a boy was attacked by nine polecats, which were found the next day in the same field, when three of them were shot. Such instances have been substantiated in France, and in the account of the polecat and its habits in that excellent work, *Les Chiens, le Gibier et ses Ennemis*, the writer says: "One has even seen him fly at the legs of a man, or upon a child." There are few more terrifying incidents than an attack on a human being by a company of polecats, or even stoats and weasels, when hunting together. They rush up the body and go for the throat; and a Highland shepherd once related what an escape he had in tearing these creatures from his body, when attacked by a party of seven stoats.

Red polecats have been occasionally heard of from the coastal region of North Cardiganshire. In 1927 Mr J. M. Howell, of Aberdovey, reported to *The Field* that his keeper had brought to him a fine specimen of this rare creature, which had been caught in a rabbit-trap.

The polecat runs to 22 or 23 inches in length—the tail measuring from 6½ to 7 inches, the body 15½ to 16 inches. The upper colouring is dark tawny brown, the sides and belly yellowish, the throat, limbs and most of the tail being almost black. The short, rounded ears

are tipped with white, and white appears on the nose, chin and round the eyes, while between the eyes and the ear is a patch of light colouring. The general coloration is produced by the blending of the short, dull-yellowish under fur and the longer hairs, which are black. This animal is much more sturdily built than the stoat, weasel or ferret, and is very muscular. It is an almost omnivorous feeder, devouring as it does the young and eggs of all kinds of birds, as well as rabbits, hares, frogs, fish, and even honey. It is extraordinarily destructive, and if it makes its way into a dovecot or among the young of poultry and game-birds it will wreak terrible mischief. Curiously enough, old-fashioned farmers never had much objection to the neighbourhood of polecats, alleging that their rat-killing propensities made them not unworthy neighbours. I have, in much more recent days, heard farmers say the same thing of weasels.

The destruction of vermin by modern game-preservers has, of course, led to the almost complete disappearance of so deadly an enemy as the polecat from the greater part of the country. In the days of my boyhood—more than fifty years ago—I can remember that polecat-ferrets, created by the crossing of a polecat with the domestic ferret, were quite common in the Midland counties of Warwickshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. In those days young polecats were comparatively easy to get hold of. They came, I think, from Whittlebury Forest, in the Grafton country, and other wild parts. They were not difficult to tame, and strengthened the race of ferrets very considerably. A polecat-ferret was, and is, always dark of coat, a great worker, and, of course, excellent for rabbiting. Nowadays one finds this useful

cross somewhat less frequently than one used to do; yet the polecat-ferret is still pretty often seen and is an invaluable cross for rabbiting. The ferret, by the way, is not indigenous to Britain, though it has been known in this country for more than six hundred years. It is said to have come from Africa—whether as an albino race is not known—and the Romans and Greeks were familiar with it. Strabo states that it was brought from Africa into Spain; and Pliny mentions that it was used for rabbit-hunting in his day. The polecat (*Mustela putorius*) is unknown in Ireland, but is found in other parts of Britain as well as most of the wilder parts of Central Europe. In France it is still abundant. The French name for this animal is *le putois*. The old English names were foumart, fitchett, fitchew, and occasionally fillemark.

The stoat (*Mustela erminea*) is still common—in many places far too common—all over Britain, except, I believe, in the Hebrides and the Isle of Arran. The Irish variety, known locally as "assogue," in size midway between the English stoat and weasel, has been elevated to a rank of its own and is now known by naturalists as *Mustela hibernica*. The true British stoat has been long known also by its other name of ermine, from the white coat and black tail extremity which it assumes in northern regions during severe winter weather. This change of colour, from brown to pure white, although not at all common in the south of England, is nevertheless to be occasionally found there; while skewbald or parti-coloured examples are more frequent. The ermine winter robe of the stoat has for ages been valued as a fur for the decoration of royalty and the great. The

1. STOAT
2 WEASEL

PHOTOGRAPHED FROM LIFE

THESE LITTLE ANIMALS, SMALL THOUGH THEY ARE, ARE NEXT TO THE WILD CAT THE FIERCEST AND MOST BLOOD-THIRSTY OF THE BRITISH CARNIVORA THEY FEAR NOTHING AND WILL, WHEN IN COMPANY OR A FAMILY PARTY, ATTACK EVEN HUMAN BEINGS

fur of the Siberian and Russian ermine is much thicker and finer than any other, as might be expected, and it always brought higher prices. A hundred years ago, however, when furs were much less costly than they are now, ermine skins could be bought in the countries where they were trapped for as little as £2 or £3 the hundred.

Stoats are almost omnivorous feeders where flesh and even fish are concerned, and the contents of their larders, especially when they have young, are often astonishing. Seven chaffinches, two young rabbits and a blackbird have been found in one burrow inhabited by a stoat. In another haunt were found a newly killed partridge, a perch of half-a-pound and two eels. Eels are probably captured when making their way overland. How the perch was captured is difficult to say, but it may be remembered that stoats, weasels and polecats are all as good swimmers as they are expert climbers. Stoats are quite equal to the difficult feat of killing the golden plover, which sleeps usually in an open field or upon an open moor. They capture hens' eggs and have been observed rolling the egg before them with great rapidity, using their forepaws and noses.

Mr A. L. Butler, writing to *The Field* in 1926, described a very curious feature in connection with a stoat's food. He saw one of these animals carrying in its mouth a round white object which looked like an egg. He fired and killed the stoat and examined its capture, which had rolled from its mouth. This looked like a small cream-cheese, about the size of a pigeon's egg, and was, in fact, the entire contents of a young rabbit's

stomach, "the milk which had formed the unfortunate baby's last meal, in process of digestion." It is rather curious that baboons in South Africa have acquired the habit of killing young goats and lambs for the same purpose, ripping out the milk-bag and devouring it. It is worth noting that this stoat, a female, was about to give birth to a family of eleven young. This is an unusually large number of young, the average being from four to eight, occasionally nine or ten, at a birth.

It may be realised from these notes how dangerous a neighbour the stoat is to the nestlings of partridges and pheasants. Stoats are occasionally found hunting in considerable packs—no doubt family gatherings—and are then dangerous enemies even to a full-grown man. The curious chattering or "yaffling" cry heard when such hunting parties are afoot is believed to be, in reality, the excited cry of the "young entry." But this cry may be occasionally heard from a stoat when hunting alone. I once encountered a stoat which was evidently hunting a rabbit. I crossed its path near a hedge, as I was hurrying to pick up a pack of foot harriers—the Hailsham. The little creature came at me—I suppose from annoyance, or fear, or both combined—and chattered at me excitedly, glaring with fierce eyes. I ran at it with my stick and it then bolted into the hedge, but its savage boldness was remarkable.

In 1920, when cycling with my wife from St Boswells to Denholm, in Roxburghshire, we were passing along the road through a belt of trees with long grass on either side. From this thick growth a strong stench of

carrion came from some dead animal. We noticed a disturbance in the long grass and heard sharp cries or "chattering," and some half-a-dozen stoats ran into the road in front of my wife's cycle and made as if they would come at her, some chattering fiercely. She drove through them and went on. Some of them ran off, and as I passed two or three remained. I tried to run one of these down with my cycle but just missed it. There must have been a large number of stoats feeding upon the carrion—I should estimate over a dozen—and they seemed in a very excited state, even before we came up, from the disturbance and chattering that we heard. Whether there were two different families and they were disagreeing with one another I cannot say, but it looked like it. The aspect of those we saw was certainly very menacing. A child or children, passing that way, might have had a very unpleasant time with these ferocious little creatures.

It is, of course, well known that a single stoat will hunt down and surely kill a rabbit or a hare. The fatal ending to the chase of a rabbit can be well understood; but why a hare, which from its pace and staying power could run right away for miles and easily get rid of its murderer, if it would fly its own country for a time, will thus allow itself to be destroyed, is an amazing fact. Towards the end of the chase the hare, as does the rabbit, often gives up the ghost, and, squealing, allows itself to be slain by its bloodthirsty pursuer. When the stoat fastens on to its prey, invariably on the neck, and tastes blood, it is, for the time, quite oblivious of danger or the approach of man. I was shooting on the downs one day with a friend near Beachy Head. We had just

finished lunch, and, on rising, noticed about twenty yards away, near a piece of gorse, a rabbit jumping about in extraordinary fashion. Then we saw that a stoat was fastened to its neck. My friend picked up his gun, approached within a dozen yards and fired, killing both rabbit and stoat.

The stoat is so deadly and hateful an enemy to game, poultry, pigeons and the like that every keeper and most country people know how to set traps for it. Some, of course, are much more skilful than others. The French equally dislike so bloodthirsty an enemy. "The ermine is only fit to be destroyed, on account of the harm it does. One kills it as one does its congeners (polecats and weasels) by means of a trap which is rubbed with a little oil of aniseed or henbane and is then baited with an egg, some honey or a small bird." Thus writes a French sportsman-naturalist of this animal.

Weasels measure in good average specimens about 10 to 11 inches, of which the tail takes up no more than some $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The weight of so lean and lithe a creature is not much, some five to five and a half ounces. The females are very slender and run smaller than the males, measuring from 8 to 9 inches, with a weight of two ounces, or a trifle more. The colour is pale tawny brown, the top of the head, cheek and nape being darker than the rest. The throat and under parts are white. These animals prey upon many kinds of animals and birds—young rabbits and hares, rats, mice, moles, game-birds, small birds, frogs and poultry. A curious instance of the death of a weasel, after biting through the head and killing a toad, was mentioned in

The Field of 18th November 1926. The weasel lay coiled up close to the toad. Was it poisoned by the toad, which undoubtedly has some toxic secretion in its skin? The question, I believe, remains unanswered. But it is known that dogs will salivate freely if they happen to pick up a toad.

Weasels, and, indeed, all the *mustelidæ*, are plucky little creatures, as the following anecdote will demonstrate. Two men were playing golf on the course at Nairn, in that shire, and on approaching the ninth hole they came across five small weasels, running one behind the other. One of these they killed, in defence of the rabbits preserved there. Then one of the rest of the little pack dashed back towards the human enemy, "seized its dead companion in its mouth and carried it fully twenty yards to a ditch, where they were lost to view." Surely a very courageous act, this, vouched for by a correspondent of *The Field* in September 1910.

Weasels were formerly often known as "Fairies" in the West of England, and the name is still occasionally heard there. The derivation must, I think, have come from the old Norman-French name *furet* (easily corrupted), which is still the French word for the ferret. On the other hand, it has been suggested that the French name for the ermine or stoat, *vair*, has something to do with the West Country name of "Fairy." My vote must go for *furet*, which I think is the true origin of the name.

Hunting the Irish so-called "weasel"—or stoat, as it really is—was, and possibly still is, a popular pursuit. Sixteen or seventeen years ago you might come across

pretty girls in Cork and Kerry counties (no doubt pretty girls are always there) who wore the tails of Irish stoats proudly in their hats as trophies of the chase; while barefooted boys spoke with enthusiasm of the great hunts they enjoyed with a sporting little pack of small beagles, hunted by Captain Herrick, who brought off many a keen and exciting chase in that countryside. Banks and loose stone walls were the hiding-places of the stoats, and the hunt was usually accompanied by a dozen countrymen armed with sticks. The sport began round the fields, trying banks and walls for a line of the quarry, until the "find" took place. A brilliant and exciting hunt then ensued until the stoat—or "weasel," as it was always called—was driven to its last holt in some old wall or rabbit-burrow. Then the Master would take a handful of squibs from his pocket, set a light to one end and, amid a profound silence, insert the lot into the hole where the quarry had taken refuge. Bang! would go the squibs, and the stoat, bolted from its stronghold, would be discerned flying along the top of the wall or bank. The end usually came soon after; the beagles ran into their quarry, and loud "Whoo-whoops!" proclaimed the death. These were great hunts, much delighted in by the countryside of that era. Whether they are still carried on history does not relate.

Stoat-hunting with Sealyham terriers has been tried here and there, and has also yielded excellent sport. Mr C. J. G. Hulkes, formerly, I think, Master of Beagles, was one of those who showed some very interesting sport of this kind some ten or twelve years ago. Fuses for driving out the stoats were employed also in these

hunts, and the numbers of the gallant little pack were usually about two and a half couples. Stoats are very elusive, and it is a difficult chase, but I know that on at least one memorable day a brace were killed by Mr Hulkes's pack.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Lord Cornwallis & the Linton Beagles

I HAD often heard of the Linton Beagles and of the fine sport they have shown for more than forty years in the Weald of Kent, but I had never had the pleasure of seeing a hunt with them until about two years since, when I met them near Hadlow, in the Tonbridge district. It was a morning of some fog, with, as often happens, good scent. The mist hung till past noon, and the pack, during those hours, could never be denied, and showed themselves to great advantage. They ran with extraordinary keenness and a fine cry, casting themselves with wonderful fling and certainty. As the fog cleared scent grew feebler, and in the afternoon the little hounds occasionally required assistance. Lord Cornwallis, who founded the pack as far back as 1888, carried the horn. For years he hunted his beagles on foot, but now, at the age of sixty-two, he was riding a good-looking grey hunter which had been his son's charger during the war—Captain Cornwallis was in the Scots Greys—and got off occasionally to give his hounds help at a check. He looked what he is, a fine example of the old English country gentleman—a type becoming yearly more rare, unfortunately. I remember that we killed three hares that day, and that the Linton Beagles were in great form and hunted throughout with extraordinary zest and keenness. Since then I have seen them in the

field on other occasions, and have had every reason to confirm the high opinion I then formed of their merits. Lord Cornwallis, while remaining Master of the pack, has now handed over the horn to his eldest son, Captain the Hon. W. S. Cornwallis, M.C., who hunts them on foot and shows remarkable sport.

I have recently had the pleasure of seeing these hounds at their kennels, Linton Park, the seat of Lord Cornwallis, near Maidstone. Here, in a pleasant situation, they are remarkably well housed in good modern kennels, with everything necessary to their well-being. Their kennel huntsman, Tom Peach, sen., had been with them during the whole of their long career, and was only then resigning them to younger hands. To his care and management, Lord Cornwallis tells me, much of the success of the pack has to be attributed.

Lord Cornwallis founded the pack, as I have said, in the year 1888; and in September 1928, in an open letter to his neighbouring landowners, tenant farmers and followers, he thanked them all for their long-continued courtesy, kindness and friendship. No Hunt Master could have had happier relations. But then, it is to be remembered, he had rendered great services to his shire, as well as being a famous sportsman in one of the most sporting counties in England. He is Chairman of the County Council, a Deputy-Lieutenant, a colonel of Yeomanry, and he was for nine years Member of Parliament for the Maidstone district. He was Chairman of the Royal Agricultural Society as far back as 1906. He is also Deputy Grand Master of the Freemasons of England, and at the request of the Grand Master, the Duke of Connaught, made, two winters since, a tour of the

whole of India, as well as Burma, visiting branches and doing a great deal of excellent work. He was accompanied on that tour by Lady Cornwallis. There is, in fact, no busier or more popular country gentleman than the Master of the Linton Beagles. It may be recalled that, for his great services to the county, Mr Cornwallis, as he then was, was created a peer in 1927.

Lord Cornwallis started hare-hunting in September 1888 with a pack consisting mainly of a mixture of small harriers and beagles; his harriers he got from the Foxbush (Mr Fitch Kemp's), Mr G. Knight of Headcorn, the Heronden Hall, the Roundway Harriers, and some of Sir W. Curteis's blood. Beagles he obtained from the Trinity (Cambridge) pack, the famous Halstead (Mr J. Russel's) in Kent, and other hunts. From these sources he bred a pack of excellent 16½ inch cross-bred hounds, with which he showed for many years first-rate sport in a wide country round Maidstone. Nearly all this blood disappeared towards the end of the war, when the remnant of the pack was shipped to Salonika, to show sport to the British troops in that classic region, only one and a half couples being retained. One wonders whether Xenophon, the earliest hare-hunter known to history, ever pursued his quarry in the Salonika country!

Soon after the end of the war Lord Cornwallis bought the Rodmersham Beagles—a first-rate pack—from Mr Mercer, who was then taking over the Tickham Foxhounds. Mr Mercer, a great hound man, had taken infinite care in the breeding of this pack, and, with these hounds as a nucleus and additions from such good strains as the Worcester Park, the Clifton Foot Harriers,

LORD CORNWALLIS (CENTRE) AND THE LINTON BEAGLES

THIS VIEW OF LORD CORNWALLIS AND HIS BEAGLES WAS TAKEN IN THE GREAT AVENUE OF LINTON PARK, THE FAMILY SEAT. THE PACK IS ONE OF THE SMARTEST AND MOST SUCCESSFUL IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND.

the Blean and other beagle packs, Lord Cornwallis has been able to build up his present excellent "cry" of eighteen couples of 15½ inch beagles.

The illustration shown herewith, with Lord Cornwallis and his whippers-in, taken in the big elm avenue at the back of Linton Park House, gives a very fair idea of the excellence and general "sortiness" of the pack. There is a touch of the old-fashioned light colour in these hounds —a colour which usually indicates good working quality, and which I admire so much. A first-rate hound of this hue is Limit, a lemon-and-white bitch, which I remember running almost invariably at head when I first saw the pack at work near Hadlow. Other good hounds of this type, among an excellent all-round lot, are Packman, a sturdy white and badger pie, and Leader. Gambler and Pilgrim, two tri-coloured dog-hounds which I liked very much, were described to me, with the others mentioned, as all excellent workers. Among the bitches, Racket (tri-colour), Fidget, Ruby and Lofty (three light-coloured hounds) were very taking beagles, all described as good workers. After all, your hounds may be as handsome as paint, but if they fail you in nose, cry and hunting-power they are worse than useless. Other excellent hounds which I remarked were Gaylad, Trumpery, Twilight, Lilac, Raglan and Reprobate. I asked where the light colour in the pack was drawn from, and was told that it comes, in the main, from a hound called Lawyer, by Halstead Pelican out of Springhill Liberty (1912). Packman, that sturdy-looking beagle, is by Pilgrim (of Clifton descent) from Gertrude, who traced back to the old pack. This is a hound of great good looks as well as determination, as may be noted

in kennel, when his hackles go up at once if he is jostled or thinks his dignity affronted.

These are only samples of a very excellent and level pack of beagles—shown in the illustration—whose hunting quality in the field is quite admirable. All are workers, and their music is a delight to hear. In addition to the sire Lawyer, of which I have spoken, other sires which have done well for the pack since its reorganisation have been Galloper, Reprobate (of Blean ancestry), Fencer (from the Rodmersham), Trumper and Gaylad.

Owing to their former admixture of harrier blood, now very far distant and all but obliterated since the war, the Linton Beagles are not qualified for exhibition at Peterborough or other hound shows. This is no great matter. After all, although the present pack is within a hairbreadth of being absolutely pure beagle blood, it is the working qualities of the hounds that tell; and in working qualities few packs in England can excel the Linton pack. Their good looks, as may be seen from the illustration, are obvious. Stud-book beagles are all very well, but we do not want beagles to be too much tainted with foxhound blood and to become in the future nothing more nor less than handsome dwarf foxhounds. The cultivation of the ancient type of hunting-beagle, coupled with due improvement in shape, eradicating obvious faults, is, in my judgment, the consummation to be worked for in the hunting-beagle of the future.

The house at Linton Park is a big, roomy, eighteenth-century mansion, which descended to its present proprietor from Cornwallis ancestry. It contains many interesting family pictures, which trace back to Mann, Wykeham Martin, Fiennes and Cornwallis relations.

There is, among others, a good portrait of Sir Horace Mann, who spent the greater part of his life as British Envoy at various Continental courts, and was the intimate friend of Horace Walpole, whose correspondence with him of forty years' duration is so familiar a feature of the Walpole *Letters*. With no striking architectural features, the house is a typical English country gentleman's seat, set in a large, well-timbered park, with fine views over the Weald and the distant hills of Kent.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Some Old Sporting Pictures

I.—LADIES' RIDING-DRESS IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURIES

RIDING-COSTUME for women has, without doubt, seen a good many changes during the course of history. That women rode astride in the early ages is shown by the figures on Greek vases, describing the warlike feats of the Amazons. That they continued to ride astride during many centuries is evidenced by the fact that when Richard II. married, in 1383, Anne of Bohemia, daughter of the Emperor Charles IV., that princess is described as introducing the side-saddle into England. This was a cumbrous arrangement, said to have been shaped like a "bench," with a hanging step whereon both feet were placed. A footman, or squire, was a necessary accompaniment; and it seems to have been used only in formal processions.

That the side-saddle for women slowly made its way and came into vogue is shown by the pictures of Queen Elizabeth when hunting, or reviewing her troops, as at Tilbury Fort, during the Armada scare; and of Anne of Denmark hunting with James I. Yet the fashion progressed but slowly. Women still rode astride in many parts of Europe, and at the end of the eighteenth century, in Goya's portrait of the Queen of Spain, to

LADY HENRIETTA CAVENDISH HOLLES COUNTESS OF OXFORD
FROM THE PORTRAIT BY J. WOOTTON AT WELBECK ABBEY (SEE CHAPTER 12)

be seen in the Prado Gallery at Madrid, that great lady is depicted riding in such a fashion.

I have recently come across some interesting examples of side-saddle costume during the eighteenth century which may be of interest. The first of these is from a painting by J. Wootton which hangs at Welbeck, the Duke of Portland's seat in Nottinghamshire. Wootton (1678-1765) was the greatest artist of sporting pictures during the first half of the eighteenth century. His portrait, shown herewith, is described on the frame as "Lady Henrietta Cavendish Holles, Countess of Oxford (1694-1755)." The lady is sometimes described as "Lady Henrietta Harley." I believe that she married a Harley and thereafter became Countess of Oxford. In this picture, painted in Wootton's best manner, she is mounted on an excellent horse. Her riding-skirt is short, compared with the long and cumbrous garment which came into vogue in late Georgian and early Victorian times. It seems to be rather ornate for hunting purposes, but was possibly used only for riding out and paying calls. The full-skirted coat, voluminous neckcloth and velvet cap appear to be characteristics of the period about 1710-1730. Her horse is ridden, as were most of that time, on a snaffle bridle.

The Countess of Oxford is shown in another very spirited picture by Wootton—also at Welbeck—hare-hunting on Orwell Heath, Suffolk. Unfortunately, the pigments of this excellent painting have faded so much as to render a good reproduction impossible. The lady is riding this time in a cocked hat and a very long and full-skirted coat. Her horse is bedecked

with a gorgeous saddle-cloth. On her right rides a sportsman, presumably her husband; the huntsman is on her left, blowing lustily on a long, straight, two-foot hunting-horn, which characterises the period of about 1725, before the cumbrous French horn came into vogue. A shepherd has just put away the hare, which is shown making off, hot-foot, on the side of a hill. The hounds, quite a useful lot, are tearing after their quarry full cry. Several cavaliers, but no other lady, are shown. This is quite one of the best hunting pieces of the eighteenth century. The pity is that the colours are so faded. It would be worth the while of an artist to make a copy of so fine a piece, if permission could be obtained from the Duke of Portland.

My next illustration shows Wootton again at his best; the original is in first-rate condition, and is well worth the attention of all those who care to follow the curious changes of fashion in the riding-skirt. I should judge the period to be about 1730–1740. The picture hangs at Squerryes Court, Westerham, the home of that famous hunting family the Wardes, of whom the great John Warde, Master of many packs of hounds, was so prominent a figure. The portrait is that of Mrs J. Warde, who is shown on an admirable and well-bred white horse. She rides with a single bridle, but the bit is this time apparently a curb. Her riding-skirt is full, ample and very ornate, but is sensibly short. The open neck, with a fichu, and the flat straw hat seem hardly adapted for riding in a breeze; but the lady was probably dressed for calling. A handsome saddle-cloth may be noted beneath the riding-skirt.

A third illustration shows a woeful change in the

1 MRS WARDE of SQUERRYES COURT, WESTERHAM
FROM THE PAINTING BY T WOOTTON

2 MISS MARY ARABELLA MUSTERS
FROM THE PAINTING BY BEN MARSHALL

length of the riding-skirt between the period of 1740 and 1824, which last is the date at which this excellent and characteristic picture was painted by Ben Marshall. The charming little lady of the portrait is Miss Mary Arabella Musters, who was, doubtless, a member of the well-known hunting family which has given several masters of foxhounds famous in the history of the English chase. Her dark skirt is manifestly far too long for comfort or for safety, especially in the hunting field. Yet in the early years of the reign of Queen Victoria the skirt was further lengthened, as may be seen in early equestrian pictures of that queen. The short "empire" waist, the neck frill or ruffle, and the light-coloured beaver hat are all typical of the period of George IV. The flea-bitten grey pony, which shows a trace of Arab blood, is painted in Marshall's best style. Altogether, this is one of the most delightful of that great artist's pieces. The pity of it is that it is now lost to English collections, the painting having been acquired by Mr D. H. Carstairs, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to whose courtesy I am indebted for permission to reproduce it here. It will be noticed that the young lady rides with a snaffle bridle —why is the snaffle so neglected nowadays?—and that her mount is furnished with a crupper. The crupper, too, has almost completely vanished from the scene, except for ponies carrying panniers or game-baskets. I can remember, as a boy, riding hunting with such an appendage. An old Northamptonshire sportsman, well known with the Duke of Grafton's Hounds, greeted me with his usual beaming smile and remarked: "Hullo, my boy! You've got your breast-plate on

in the wrong place!" I never rode with a crupper again.

Longish riding-skirts continued in vogue until the seventies and eighties of last century. They were most dangerous for hunting, and a woman getting a fall was terribly handicapped by them. Many a bad accident was attributed to their use. Yet famous hunting women not seldom rode well and boldly to the head of the field when wearing them. I can remember in the seventies, when hunting with the Grafton, seeing the Empress of Austria and her sister, the ex-Queen of Naples, two of the finest horsewomen of their time, riding splendidly, if rather recklessly — they stopped at nothing — when attired in dangerously long skirts. The feminine costume of the present day, which began to come into fashion in the nineties, is certainly a wonderful improvement, and women now hunting should bless their predecessors who introduced so great a boon. It is certain that, whatever changes of fashion may be in store, the short riding-skirt will never again lose its vogue.

I am much indebted to the Duke of Portland for permission to reproduce the portrait of Henrietta, Countess of Oxford; and to Colonel Warde of Squerryes Court for the like permission to reproduce the picture of Mrs J. Warde.

II.—A COLONEL THORNTON PICTURE

The illustration shown herewith is from a famous hunting picture usually attributed to Philip Reinagle, A.R.A., whose period dates from 1749 to 1833. It is one of the pleasantest, most spirited and most truthful pictures of hunting left to us from a great period—the

period in which Ben Marshall, George Stubbs, J. N. Sartorius, the Wolstenholmes, H. Alken and other well-known artists flourished.

The accepted history of this painting is that it was a commission from the well-known Colonel Thornton, portraying himself and his hounds in full cry of a fox which has just quitted cover. This delightful picture is everywhere full of life and action. The famous Colonel is shown on a big grey hunter—he favoured always, it is said, big horses—cheering on a couple of his tail hounds. The portrait is, probably, the best of Colonel Thornton after he had attained middle life. The far-stretching scenery is excellent, giving an almost perfect portrayal of an old English hunt as it was conducted some one hundred and twenty years ago. The only flaw seems to be in the nearer of the two tail hounds, which is somewhat awkwardly portrayed and has not quite "come off."

There is a good line-engraving of this picture by J. Scott, but the illustration shown here is from one of two paintings, and is, as I have said, usually attributed to P. Reinagle.

There is, however, some mystery about this painting of *Breaking Cover*, and there are, apparently, two in existence. These are almost identically the same; but in one of them there is a slight variation in the painting of the Colonel's head, making him look somewhat older, while the nearer of the last two hounds, just emerging from cover, has no head marking and is all white. Again, the grey horse is not so well rendered, especially in the shoulder. I first became aware of these differences while examining photographs of these two

paintings in Sir Robert Witt's wonderful collection at 32 Portman Square. I then made the discovery that the original of the illustration shown herewith is attributed to P. Reinagle and Sawrey Gilpin; while the other almost identical painting is attributed to Sawrey Gilpin and P. Reinagle. How are these two pictures to be explained? Again, if the two artists combined forces, which are the portions of the work to be attributed to Reinagle and which to Gilpin? Both were animal painters, but, probably, Sawrey Gilpin, who lived at Newmarket for some time during his career, painted more horses than Reinagle. Yet Reinagle was quite equal to painting a good horse and its rider. He painted various racehorses, including Sir Peter Teazle, done in 1778.

It is a curious fact, also, that the pendent picture, *Death of the Fox*, is, in Sir R. Witt's catalogue, attributed to both artists. The puzzle is a very remarkable one.

I then attempted to trace the history of this fine painting further. I discovered at Sir Robert Witt's that Messrs A. Tooth & Co. of Bond Street had at one time been in possession of it. They were kind enough to inform me that the painting from which my illustration was obtained was sold by them to America in 1916. This picture was attributed by Messrs Tooth to Reinagle and Gilpin. Where the replica, or copy, of which I have spoken is, I am not aware. If any reader can throw further light upon the early history of this noble hunting picture it would be a kindly act.

But there is yet a further puzzle in connection with this fine old picture. Mr W. Shaw Sparrow, in his very

BREAKING COVER

COLONEL THORNTON ON THE GREY HORSE FROM THE PAINTING BY P REINAGLE A R A AND BEN MARSHALL.

interesting book, *The Sport of Our Fathers*, published by Cassell & Co. in 1929, writes as follows:

"I have forgotten to mention a very interesting—and also little known—fact that belongs to Marshall's friendship with Colonel Thornton. We have seen how Marshall was very much influenced by Sawrey Gilpin's large picture *The Death of a Fox*. When Thornton commissioned a companion picture he chose Philip Reinagle as his painter, but stipulated that Ben Marshall should portray the grey hunter upon which he, the Colonel, would ride. Thornton was to be represented in the act of unkennelling his fox, and screaming with enthusiasm to his hounds. The Colonel was painted by Reinagle, and the hunter by Marshall, as "Nimrod" pointed out in the *Sporting Magazine* (vol. lxiv., p. 198, 1824). There is also another witness, *The New Sporting Magazine* (vol. xix., p. 332), which says, 'The best picture of a gallop is Colonel Thornton's grey horse, by Marshall, in Reinagle's picture of *Breaking Cover*, evidently, however, not meant for a racing pace.' And I note further that my friend, General Cowie, got the same information from his grandfather, who bought the picture after Thornton's death."

From all these various details I am inclined to gather that Reinagle painted most of the picture shown herewith, including the portrait of the famous Colonel; and that Ben Marshall was responsible for the good grey horse. Sawrey Gilpin may have taken a hand in the second picture of which I have made mention, but the whole subject is very difficult to unravel at this distance of time.

Reinagle did other work for Colonel Thornton, in-

cluding a portrait of which a print, engraved in 1806, formed the frontispiece to that advertising gentleman's *Sporting Tour in France*. He also executed *Roebuck-Shooting in the Forest of Lenore*, in which the Colonel is shown "with the only twelve-barrelled rifle ever made."

Colonel Thornton was the first English sportsman to discover the sporting possibilities of Scotland. He was an eccentric character, given to over-emphatic gesture in an age of exaggerated pose, but he was undeniably a great sportsman. To-day we should not judge his eccentricities too hardly, for if he was at times as fantastic as Lord Barrymore, he was as keen a sportsman and less of a boor than Mytton. The son of an old Yorkshire county family, he was orphaned at sixteen, and inherited the family estate of Thornville in 1774. A fine athlete, he devoted his early life to sport. In 1786 he made his great expedition to Scotland—then looked on as a wildly barbarous, remote and savage land. The inspiration may have come from Dr Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, published as a travel book a decade earlier; but anyway Thornton, a young man of wealth and position, did his trip in style, and was the first to herald the possibilities of sport north of the Border.

He sailed from Hull in his yacht, the *Falcon*, to Forres, Morayshire. His equipment was all that the sporting outfitter of the day could produce, and included his celebrated invention, the seven-barrelled rifle, and his two favourite guns, "Death" and "Destruction," single-barrelled flintlocks of their time.

His book, *A Sporting Tour through the Northern Parts of England and Great Part of the Highlands of Scotland*,

is good reading even to-day. It contains perhaps no records of great bags, but includes some very tall stories, and is generally good breezy stuff of its period. What odd fishing they enjoyed in those days—imagine untouched Scottish waters! Shortly after this tour he sold Thornville and bought Allerton Mauleverer from the Duke of York. The new house was rechristened Thornville Royal, and was a decidedly sporting establishment.

To Colonel Thornton, perhaps, we still owe the French tradition of the "English milor." In 1802 he went on a sporting tour in France in a special carriage of his own design, with places for a dozen dogs, an armoury of guns, and special places for the ladies' bandboxes. He carried an artist, two valets, a gamekeeper, a huntsman and six couple of hounds. The tour provided poor sport, but vast entertainment, and the Colonel, despite his own rather careless morality, was, like Lord Byron, very much shocked at the newly introduced waltz!

He had now lived extravagantly for some forty years, and the pace was too hot. Thornville Royal was sold; hounds, horses, guns and all went, and even the two hundred and fifty odd thousand pounds brought by the sale could not check his financial decline. Slowly the old sportsman falls under a cloud: robbed by rascals, hunted by duns, finally barricaded against siege by bailiffs, he at last escapes to France. He lived there in considerable style, and died suddenly in 1823, at the age of sixty-six, just as he was about to take out his hounds.

He has been accused of being a "sporting mountebank," of "puff and bunkum," "swollen head," and various

other attributes; and he was, in fact, a persistent self-advertiser. But, with all his faults, the man was at heart a good sportsman, and enjoyed and retained the friendship of eminent men. He was a fine horseman and shot, a skilled falconer, and a great judge of dogs and hounds.

The Colonel's portrait in *Breaking Cover* is undoubtedly one of the best and most reliable left to us of that restless and limelight-loving personality. I place *Breaking Cover* among the half-dozen finest hunting pictures of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

III.—OLD HUNTING SCENES, BY FRANCIS AND J. N. SARTORIUS AND R. D. COCKBURN

For more than a hundred years the fine old hunting pieces of the eighteenth century, by such famous masters as J. Wootton, George Stubbs, Ben Marshall, J. N. Sartorius, the Wolstenholmes, and others, were comparatively neglected by English collectors. They hung in many an ancient manor-house and mansion, ignored and almost forgotten, save by the old families for whose ancestors they had been painted.

Before the war there was an awakening, and American and German collectors began to appear on the scene. It is curious that the Germans, who are not a hunting nation, though they shoot a good deal, should have suddenly been smitten with the passion for old English sporting pictures. Yet such was the case. They are not buyers now, and many of their pre-war purchases have returned to this country or gone to the States. The

1. FOXHUNTER, WITH HORSE AND HOUNDS
BY FRANCIS SARTORIUS, 1780.

2. THE BREAKING-UP
BY J. N. SARTORIUS, 1819

Americans, their pockets amply filled during the period of the Great War, are, however, now more eager buyers than ever, and the prices they are willing to pay for good eighteenth-century pictures and prints are amazing.

Many of the finest English pieces are now passing from us. Happily we have a few wealthy Britons who are not willing that all our best sporting pictures—pictures which can never be replaced—shall go to the States and South America—for South Americans are also in the market for such works; and men like Lord Woolavington have come to the rescue and saved some of our most notable masterpieces of this kind. During the last few years, for example, Lord Woolavington has paid £2205 for Ben Marshall's hunting masterpiece, *Tom Oldaker on Pickle*. This and other fine paintings are now to be seen at Lavington Park, Sussex, in the wonderful collection of sporting pictures got together by Lord Woolavington. These great pieces have, no doubt, served to fix yet more attention on old hunting pictures; and just now many an old country house is being ransacked eagerly for such works.

A hunting picture by J. N. Sartorius, which came from the home of a Highland lady and was sold at Christie's in 1929, brought the extraordinary price of £4935. This was again a portrait of the famous huntsman, Tom Oldaker, on another of his hunters, "Brush." The work of J. N. Sartorius is scarcely to be compared with that of Ben Marshall or George Stubbs, and the price realised for this picture was certainly astounding. In the same year two more hunting pieces by J. N. Sartorius, representing foxhunting with the Belvoir

Hounds in 1785, which were sold at Christie's, realised £3255.

The Sartorius family came from Nuremburg in the early half of the eighteenth century, and the most noted of them, Francis (1734-1804), and his son, John N. Sartorius (1755-1828), executed a great deal of sporting work, chiefly racing and hunting subjects, between 1760 and 1828. Examples of the work of both artists are shown herewith. Francis Sartorius, who was grandson of Jacob Christopher Sartorius, a well-known engraver at Nuremburg, never got rid of a certain conventional stiffness of action, common to the paintings of animal artists of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Quaint old prints of many of the famous racehorses he depicted are still to be found here and there. His hunting paintings are much scarcer, and one here reproduced, an eighteenth-century Georgian sportsman and his hounds, is a fair example of his art. This sportsman's hat is rather a curiosity, but it may be noted that the sporting gentry of that period (1780) were, if they did not use a hunting-cap, often accustomed to wear a low-crowned beaver hat—the forerunner of the "Flat Hat Hunt," immortalised by the creator of "Jorrocks" and "Soapy Sponge."

J. N. Sartorius, the more famous son of Francis Sartorius, did much finer work than his father. His racing and, especially, his hunting pieces were in great demand even in his own time, and have now attained a much more valuable market. His painting, *The Breaking-up*, reproduced herewith, was done in 1819, and is a capital delineation of the old-fashioned hunting folk, and hounds and horses of that period.

OLD HUNTSMAN, WITH HORSE AND HOUNDS
BY R. D COCKBURN 1828.

The last hunting picture (dated 1828) in this chapter is by an artist, R. D. Cockburn, whose work is surely much less known than it ought to be. He is not mentioned in Captain Frank Siltzer's excellent book on *British Sporting Prints*, nor, I think, in the late Sir Walter Gilbey's great work, *Animal Painters of England*. But Mr Cockburn obviously could paint horses and hounds in first-rate fashion, and his work, if much of it remains, will, I venture to prophesy, become a great deal better known than it now is.

The old huntsman in the picture might surely have stood for the famous Thomas Pigg, Mr Jorrocks's huntsman; he bears a curious family likeness to John Peel, and was manifestly one of that keen and hard-bitten type. The old horse is well rendered. The hounds, a little stiffly posed, are a scratch lot, of all sorts and sizes, but I will warrant, from the look of them, that they could kill a fox handsomely. They are not a level pack, but most of them are an excellent stamp of rather rough-coated type, strong and well knit and full of determination. The three light-coloured hounds on the left are a real good sample, much resembling the light-coloured Cotley Harriers and the Axe Vale Harriers of the present day, both of which hunt with great success fox as well as hare, as I can testify from personal experience. In the centre is a good black-and-tan hound, probably tracing descent and colour from the old English bloodhound. The beagle in front is, from its lack of size, out of the picture; but no doubt it had good hunting quality, or the varmint-looking old huntsman would not have allowed it to run with the pack.

I should judge this to be a North Country—possibly a

Yorkshire—pack, but the history of the painting is not known. It is a most typical representation of old English sport, and one would like to see such a good picture reproduced and not lost to the general public, as one fears it may be.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Surrey Hunting Prints after Dean Wolstenholme, jun.

THE four hunting prints reproduced herewith represent scenes in Surrey in the early half of last century. I have no doubt that they are the work of Dean Wolstenholme, jun., and, from the costumes of the riders, I should judge the period to be between 1830 and 1840. They are from a fine set of aquatints published by McCormick, 90 Strand, and are undated.

These pictures evidently represent a hunt with the Old Surrey Foxhounds, during the early part of the Mastership of Sir Edmund Antrobus, who was at the head of these hounds from 1836 to 1847. It might be suggested that the originals were from the hand of the elder Wolstenholme (1757-1837). I do not think this can possibly be the case, as Wolstenholme, sen., died in the latter year at the age of eighty, and had done little work for some ten years before his death. That these pictures were from the hand of the younger Wolstenholme, his son, I am convinced, by the period of the riders' costume and other evidence. They are the work of a man in his prime, and the very careful detail in each plate shows infallibly, to my mind, the hand of the younger of these artists, as compared with the more rugged and somewhat cruder technique of the elder Wolstenholme. They are, too, much more modern in style than pictures by the senior painter. Dean

Wolstenholme, jun., it may be noted, was born in 1798, and died as recently as 1882, in his eighty-fifth year.

If the reader has the opportunity and will compare the four excellent prints here illustrated—excellent not only in the hunting aspect, the figures of men, horses and hounds, but also in the bold and open landscapes —with the elder Dean Wolstenholme's pictures of the death and burial of Tom Moody, crude and ungainly attempts, or with *Reynard Seeking Refuge in a Church*, another characteristic piece by the elder painter, he will, I believe, have no difficulty in pronouncing these four Surrey hunting pieces as the work of Dean Wolstenholme, jun. The Tom Moody scenes were, I grant, quite unworthy of Dean Wolstenholme, sen., at his best. They played down to a Cockney audience and were mere caricatures. Tom Moody, who died in 1796, was never a huntsman, as has been popularly supposed. He was merely a hard-drinking whipper-in, whose habits of life were not by any means of the best nor entitled to make his end of any real interest to the general public. He had a good voice and was a hard rider; but if he had not been written up by various scribes who little knew the true facts of his life, or if the senior Wolstenholme had not executed the four well-known pictures to his memory, the world would never have heard of his existence. He was whipper-in for twenty years to Squire Forester, of Willey, in Shropshire, in whose service he died. "The Druid," in his *Silk and Scarlet*, thus writes of Tom Moody:

"Although he was a very great rider, there was no hunting talent about him to justify the hero-worship

which song-writers and painters have accorded him. He was a little eight-stone man, sweet-tempered but decidedly dirty, and would as soon as not keep on his boots at a stretch from Monday to Saturday. . . . His gigantic horn, which was filled with ale, not once but a hundred times too often, was soon the only relic of him above ground."

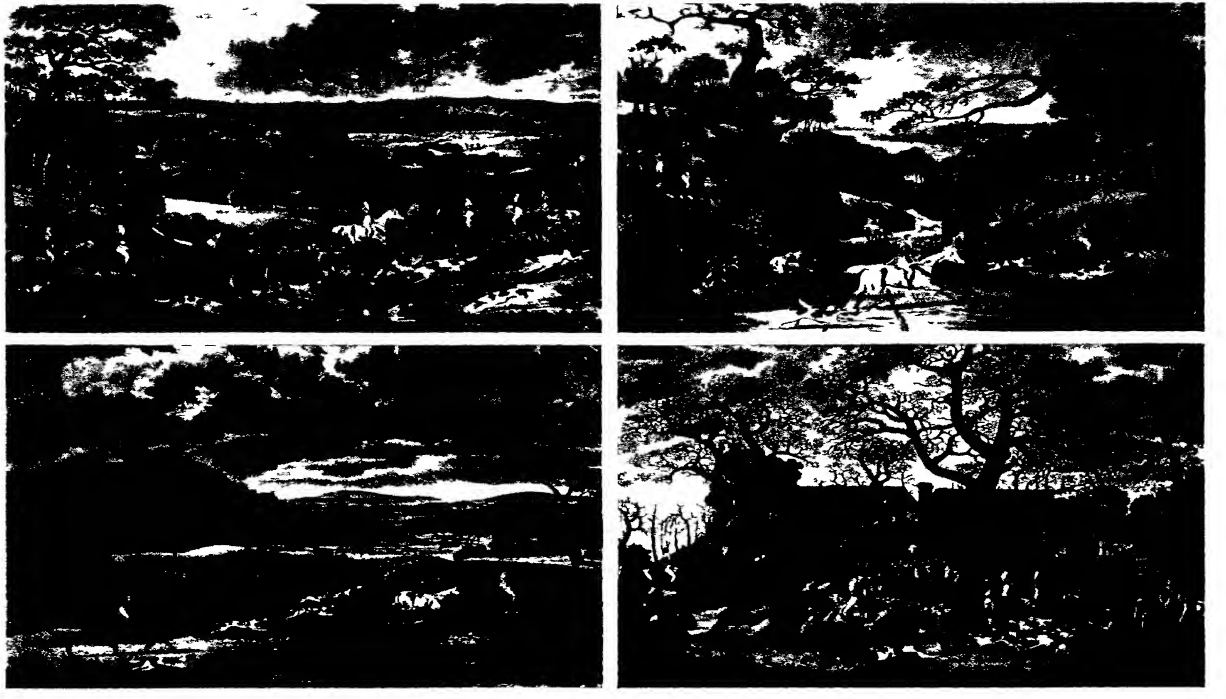
It is probable that Tom's singular request that his body should be carried to the grave by six earth-stoppers and buried in Barrow churchyard, that his old horse, equipped with his cap, whip, boots, spurs and belt, should follow him; that three view-halloos should be given over his grave—all granted and carried out—had a good deal to do with the interest taken in his demise and the subsequent popularity of the well-known pictures, which, as I say, were worthy neither of the elder Wolstenholme's talent as the painter, nor of his son's as the engraver, of the well-known plates.

The Wolstenholmes came of good Yorkshire stock, and were descended from Sir John Wolstenholme, Knight, a Farmer of Customs under King Charles I. Dean Wolstenholme, sen., was at one time a man of fair means. He lived in Essex and Herts, hunted and shot, and in his spare time amused himself with painting. Then came a lawsuit which involved him in heavy losses, and after 1793 he had to turn his hand and eye to art as a means of subsistence. Between that date and 1820 he executed a great deal of good work, chiefly in the domains of hunting, shooting and coursing. Wolstenholme, jun., shared his father's interest in sport and its illustration, and became an efficient engraver as well as a painter. He was, in fact, one of the best aquatinters

of his time, and we owe many excellent sporting scenes not only to his brush but to his engravings.

The two artists, father and son, produced between them a good many pictures of hunting in Surrey, Hertfordshire and Essex. The four examples illustrating this chapter must be placed certainly among the best work of the younger Wolstenholme—in fact, I do not think he ever excelled them in any of his hunting pieces. The first, *Drawing Cover*, shows a fine far-stretching landscape, with a view of Gatton Park, near Redhill. Hounds, horses and men are excellent. In the second plate, *The Chase*, the field is crossing the old Brighton Road, one member of the Hunt coming to grief as he reaches it. *Full Cry*, the third scene, is first-rate; in fact, as a picture of hounds running hard on a good scent, it has not often been beaten among old sporting pieces. In the middle distance, on the left, is Box Hill. It can be seen that the Surrey sportsmen of that period were well mounted; the horses are all hunters of good stamp, and the hounds are also quite up to the mark. *The Death*, on this particular occasion, took place in a wheelwright's yard at Merstham, and the whipper-in is to be seen "treeing the fox," a curious old hunting custom, which occasionally took place in Georgian and later times before the quarry was broken up.

The Old Surrey huntsman shown in these pictures I believe to be Tom Hills, a famous sportsman and a great character, who hunted these hounds for forty-two years and showed great sport during the whole of his long career. He was succeeded in the sixties of last century by his equally famous son, Sam Hills, with whom I remember hunting in the early eighties in the



THE OLD SURREY FOXHOUNDS (CIRCA 1840)
AFTER DEAN WOLSTENHOLME JUNR

very country shown in these pictures. We met, I recall, more than once at Gatton Park, which is to be seen in the first print. In the eighties it was the seat of Lord Monson; at the present time I believe Sir Jeremiah Colman is the owner.

"Old Tom Hills" had an equally famous brother, Jem Hills, for many years huntsman to the Heythrop, of whom many curious stories are told by "The Druid" in *Scott and Sebright*. The Hills are one of those remarkable families of huntsmen of which England can furnish so many fine examples. They have been notable stars in the hunting firmament for a hundred and thirty years, and in the person of Fred Hills, who served as huntsman to the Eridge Foxhounds for twenty-seven years, retiring in 1928—with whom I have seen many a good fox killed—are still going strong. Fred Hills is a son of Tom Hills, at one time huntsman to the West Kent pack, and Tom Hills was a son of the "Old Tom Hills" of the Old Surrey who is shown in the illustrations. "Old Tom" had at one time five sons serving with various hunts; a worthy and a remarkable family!

The Old Surrey hounds have combined in recent years with the Burstow pack, and the title of the hunt is now the "Old Surrey and Burstow." Their field of operations has been pushed farther and farther from London in the course of ninety years. East Grinstead, Horley and Reigate are now their best centres, and they hunt quite a good country of twenty-five miles by thirty, in Surrey, Sussex and Kent.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Big-Game Hunting: Past & Present

BIG-GAME HUNTING, in its modern sense, has endured now for nearly a hundred years. How long it is to continue is a matter of complete uncertainty. The world, even in the wilder and most remote parts of Africa and Asia, is changing rapidly; vast tracts of country have been practically cleared of great game within the memory of the present generation, and another fifty years will see yet more surprising evanishments among the great fauna of the world. Game laws, more or less well observed, have during the last thirty years set some bounds to the terribly wasteful slaughter of the past; and the formation of game preserves and sanctuaries is helping a good deal in that direction. Yet the great game are steadily disappearing, and as the wilder parts of the world, especially in Africa, are becoming opened up by railways, and peopled by settlers, the many splendid beasts of chase must of necessity continue to vanish from the face of the countries where, for untold thousands of years, they have roamed undisturbed, save for the perpetual war waged by the carnivora upon the less formidable species.

It is now nearly ninety years since Roualeyn Gordon Cumming, one of the most famous hunters of a past era, began his wonderful career in South Africa. He shot there from the year 1843 to 1850, and having well

satisfied his craving for sport and adventure and the exploration of countries then virgin to the hunter, he came home and wrote a book, which is still one of the liveliest and most interesting of its kind. This book is full of stirring pictures of nature and wild life as it then existed even within the limits of Cape Colony. On the Northern Karroos great game, such as gemsbok, wildebeest, hartebeest, Burchell's zebra, quagga, blesbok, and other animals, were in 1843 very abundant. As for springbok, those loveliest denizens of the vast and spreading plains, they roamed in millions from the Great Karroo of Cape Colony to the unknown wastes of the Lake Ngami country. The Boers, slowly settling up the country, were destroying as fast as possible all this redundant fauna, and, as Gordon Cumming remarks, the boom of their great *roers*, or smooth-bore guns, could be heard constantly across the plains as the Scottish hunter penetrated the interior. These Cape Dutch farmers shot game in immense numbers for several reasons. First, they wanted meat for themselves and their servants; secondly, they wished to clear the land for the maintenance of their own flocks and herds; thirdly, they sold the skins of their victims, which were then taken down country in thousands at a time by the ox-wagon of the period and shipped home to Europe. This system lasted, so inexhaustible seemed the supply of springbok, blesbok and wildebeest, until as late as the eighties of last century, by which time the plains of the Orange Free State and Transvaal were being rapidly denuded of their game-animals, while the hide-brokers of Mincing Lane were still doing an enormous business in the skins of these animals.

Gordon Cumming, whose book yields valuable records of the past, well describes the abodes of these rude farmers of the wilderness on the northern plains of Cape Colony:

"These were Boers of the poorer order and possessed but little of this world's goods. Their abode was in keeping with their means. It was a small mud cottage, with a roof which afforded scanty protection from the heavy periodical rains. The fire burned on the hearthstone, and a hole in the roof served at once for a window and chimney. The rafters and bare mud walls were adorned with a profusion of skins of wild animals and endless festoons of 'biltong,' or sun-dried flesh of game. Green fields or gardens there were none whatever; the wild Karroo plain stretched away from the house on all sides; and during the night springboks and wildebeests (gnu) pastured before the door. The servants consisted of one old Bushman and his wife, and the whole of their worldly possessions were an old wagon, a span of oxen, a few milk goats, and a small herd of goats and sheep."

Springbok and blesbok, especially, were then, and for a good many years after, to be encountered in what seemed a perfectly inexhaustible plenty. They were to be found in myriads, their numbers kept down only by the *brand-sikte* (burning sickness)—as the Boers called it—a scourge which occasionally rose and swept away the too redundant numbers of these vast herds of game. The *Trek-bokken* (or migration of springboks from one part of the veldt to another) was a phenomenon which then occurred periodically, and was to be witnessed to a much later date. In these wonderful passages from

one feeding-ground to another the antelopes were to be encountered literally in millions. They devoured every eatable thing before them, and often, pouring over the grazing-grounds of the Boers, carried along with them even the very flocks and herds of the settlers. These migrations lasted in the arid north-west of Cape Colony, in the tract of country known as Bushmanland, until the year 1896, when a huge *Trek-bokken* took place in that region. The trek was always directed towards the easterly region, where rain was falling and the veldt vegetation was being renewed; and it is believed that the march was impelled by the desire of the ewes to drop their fawns on the edge of this area. Cumming's description of the astonishing migrations on the Great Karroo is worth quoting:

"For about two hours before dawn I had been lying awake in my wagon, listening to the grunting of the bucks within two hundred yards of me, imagining that some large herd of springboks was feeding beside my camp; but on my rising when it was clear, and looking about me, I beheld the ground to the northward of my camp actually covered with a dense living mass of springboks, marching slowly and steadily along, extending from an opening in a long range of hills on the west, through which they continued pouring like the flood of some great river."

And later:

"Vast and surprising as was the herd of springboks which I had that morning witnessed, it was infinitely surpassed by what I beheld on the march from my *vley* (pool) to old Sweirs' camp; for on our clearing the low range of hills through which the springboks had

been pouring, I beheld the boundless plains, and even the hillsides which stretched away on every side of me, thickly covered, not with herds, but with one vast herd of springboks; far as the eye could strain, the landscape was alive with them, until they softened down into a dim red mass of living creatures."

Gordon Cumming reckoned the numbers seen that day at hundreds of thousands, which, judging from later descriptions, is quite a reasonable calculation. The old Boer, Sweirs, acknowledged to the Scottish hunter that it was a very fair *Trek-bokken*; but, said he, "You this morning behold only one flat covered with springboks; but I give you my word that I have ridden a long day's journey over a succession of flats covered with them, as far as I could see, as thick as sheep standing in a fold." Oswell, the great English sportsman who discovered Lake Ngami with Livingstone in 1849, saw one of these huge migrations, and writes also of seeing the antelopes "as thick as sheep in a fold."

Springbok, like many of the desert-bred animals, including giraffe, eland, gemsbok, hartebeest, steenbok and duyker, can, and do, go for long periods without drinking, even for months at a time. But occasionally they seem to be overtaken by an implacable thirst, which must be quenched at any cost. Some thirty years ago so dire a thirst overtook the springbok herds of Great Bushmanland that they, as if overcome by one impulse, all trekked westward to the shores of the Atlantic on the coast of Little Namaqualand. They headed straight for the sea, plunged into the salt water, drank, and died in tens of thousands. Their dead bodies littered the seashore for thirty miles, and the stench

from their decaying corpses was so evil that it drove the wandering Trek-Boers of that region far inland. This extraordinary event was recorded by Mr W. C. Scully, author of *Between Sun and Sand*, and other books, who was at that time Civil Commissioner for Namaqualand.

Gordon Cumming soon found his way up-country; crossing the Orange and Vaal rivers he penetrated to the regions of North Bechuanaland, finding everywhere a virgin country full of great game of all kinds, in which for some seasons he enjoyed wonderful sport and collected great quantities of ivory. He found elephant, rhinoceros (black and white), hippo, buffalo, lion, leopard, giraffe, eland, koodoo, impala, hartebeest, wildebeest, and many other kinds of game, in large numbers, and enjoyed extraordinary and very successful shooting. Never was there a more enthusiastic sportsman than this hardy Scot, who often rode in a kilt, and with bare legs and arms seemed to care little about the terrible thorns which the forests and jungles of all this region produce in such unwelcome profusion.

"Throughout all this country," he writes, "I had the satisfaction to reflect that a never-ending succession of herds of every species of noble game which the hunter need desire pastured there in undisturbed security; and, as I gazed, I felt that it was all my own, and that I at length possessed the undisputed sway over a forest, in comparison with which the tame and narrow bounds of the wealthiest European sportsman sink into utter insignificance."

These are undoubtedly the feelings which have inspired every British sportsman penetrating into the wonderful

recesses of the African continent, in places where the great game have been little disturbed.

When Gordon Cumming came home and published his famous book, *A Hunter's Life in South Africa*, he was greeted by a section of his public with a good deal of unbelief. The present writer was shooting in Khama's Country in 1890, crossing the Kalahari Desert and reaching Ngamiland, and had the opportunity of testing the genuineness of the adventures related by Cumming. Khama, the great Chief of Bamangwato, the most northerly of the Bechuanaland countries, had as a young man hunted with Cumming some forty years before. I asked the Chief whether the great hunter's statements were correct. Khama at once replied that he had been fully informed of the contents of the book and that the statements contained in it were thoroughly reliable. Cumming was, undoubtedly, Khama told me, a great and daring sportsman, full of strength, hardihood and energy; he had shot many elephants and other game, and amassed much ivory. I was glad to be able to obtain this information from so honest and unbiased a witness as Khama, a man of spotless character who had been himself a keen sportsman in his own wide country.

Gordon Cumming's book is an excellent and most stirring record of the great days of South African sport, when the land from the Great Karroo to the Zambesi teemed with game and the hunter trekked from one vast preserve to another, amid scenes of wild life which left to the fortunate individuals who had witnessed them memories quite ineffaceable.

Baldwin, whom I have mentioned at page 125, was a great and successful elephant-hunter, returning again

and again to civilisation with wagons loaded up with valuable ivory. He was a light-weight and a fine rider, and did most of his shooting, like the hunting Boers, with the aid of horses. He had innumerable escapes and adventures, one of which, with a lion, is worth quoting.

"I had been working hard all day," he says, "in the hot sun, with an adze, making a dissel-boom (pole) for the wagon, and was tired, lame, and shaky in the arms, and did not feel at all up to the mark for rifle-shooting." The report of a lion had been brought to him by some Masarwa Bushmen; and, like the keen sportsman he was, he sallied forth. The lion had a long start, but, following the spoor for a couple of miles, they came up with him, standing in some nasty thorn jungle.

"I dismounted," says Baldwin, "at about sixty or seventy yards and shot at him; I could see only his outline, and he dropped so instantaneously that I thought I had shot him dead. I remounted and reloaded and took a short circle and stood up in my stirrups to catch a sight of him. His eyes glared so savagely, and he lay crouched in so natural a position, with his ears alone erect, the points black as night, that I saw in a moment I had missed him. I had just put the horse in motion, with the intention of getting a shot fifteen yards nearer, when on he came with a tremendous roar, and Ferus [the horse] whipt round like a top and away at full speed. My horse was a fast one, and has run down the gemsbok, one of the fleetest antelopes, but the way the lion ran him was terrific. In an instant I was at my best pace, leaning forward, rowels deep into my horse's flanks, looking back over my left shoulder, over a hard,

flat, excellent galloping ground. On came the lion, two strides to my one. I never saw anything like it and never want to do so again; to turn in the saddle and shoot darted across my mind, when he was within three strides of me; but on second thoughts I gave a violent jerk on the near rein and a savage dig at the same time with the off heel, armed with a desperate rowel, just in the nick of time, as the old manikin bounded by me, grazing my right shoulder with his and all but unhorsing me; but I managed to right myself by clinging to the near stirrup-leather. He immediately slackened speed. As soon as I could pull up, which was not all at once, as Ferus had his mettle up, I jumped off and made a very pretty and praiseworthy shot, considering the fierce ordeal I had just passed (though I say it who ought not), breaking his hind leg at 150 yards off, just at the edge of the thicket. Fearful of losing him, I was in the saddle and chasing him like mad in an instant. His broken leg gave me great confidence, though he went hard on three legs; and I jumped off forty yards behind him and gave him the second barrel, a good shot, breaking his spine, when he lay under a bush roaring furiously, and I gave him two in the chest before he cried 'enough.'"

Wolf's illustration in colour of this adventure, the lion just missing Baldwin, as he lies right over on the near side of his galloping horse, is certainly one of the best in the whole literature of African hunting. The lions had their revenge only a few days later, at one of the hunter's next out-spans, on the Mesa river (Khama's country), where they killed two of his best horses—the gallant Ferus one of them—as well as two trek-oxen.

The "lion veldt"—as the Boers called it—was in those days a sufficiently dangerous country, and the beasts had not at that time acquired much more respect for the white hunter than they had for the Bushmen and Bechuanas. Baldwin's book, always a favourite with African hunters, is one of the liveliest and most stirring accounts that we have left to us. There are still lions and other carnivora in North Bechuanaland—the country hunted by Gordon Cumming and Baldwin—as well as giraffe, zebra and the larger antelopes; but rhinoceros have long since been shot out, and save for one troop of elephants, which find shelter in the thorniest piece of forest in Khama's country, these great pachyderms have vanished from the scene.

F. C. Selous, one of the greatest of all African big-game hunters, that fine veteran who gave his life for England at the age of sixty-four, during the war in East Africa, followed Baldwin at an interval of about ten years. He, too, had been lured to the veldt by reading the exploits of Gordon Cumming, Baldwin and others. He did a great deal of shooting among elephants and other great game, and proved himself one of the hardiest lion-hunters of his generation. His books are too well known to the present generation to require quotation in this chapter. But one passage from his admirable *African Nature Notes and Reminiscences*—a mine of wealth to the sportsman and nature lover—serves very well to illustrate the sentiment of the old school of sportsmen in the various hunting-grounds of the world, and especially of Africa. Writing in 1908 he says:

"Ah! but the old days were the best after all; or,

at any rate, I think so. The traveller by rail to the Victoria Falls will journey at his ease, it is true, in a saloon carriage, with plenty to eat and drink, through seemingly endless wastes of low forest and scrubby bush, and will probably think it a terribly monotonous and uninteresting country; but no man will ever again sit by a camp-fire near one of the little rivers the railway will cross, nor watch the great white rhinoceroses coming to drink just before dark, nor lie and listen to herd after herd of elephants drinking and bathing in the river near their camp. On one particular night in 1873, which I shall never forget, the splashing and trumpeting of troop after troop of hot and thirsty elephants was kept up from soon after dark till long past midnight. There was no monotony about the country between Buluwayo and the Victoria Falls in those days. The abundance of big game—elephants, black and white rhinoceroses, giraffes, buffaloes, zebras, and many varieties of antelopes—made it always interesting, alike to the hunter and the lover of nature."

It is to be remembered also that the white sportsman in South Africa, in those glorious days, lived in a comfortable wagon, drawn by eighteen stout trek-oxen, and had with him good hunting-horses with which to pursue the great game whenever and wheresoever he listed—a vast difference from "foot-slogging" in other parts of Africa.

In the years 1861 and 1862 that distinguished sportsman, Sir Samuel Baker, famous for his discovery of Lake Albert Nyanza, one of the Nile sources, was exploring the Abyssinian rivers which feed that great stream. In his book, *The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia*,

he gives us some wonderful pictures of the wild life he encountered in those virgin and utterly unknown regions. The great game of Africa were to be found there in wonderful plenty—elephants, black rhinoceroses, hippos, lions and other carnivora, and giraffes in extraordinary numbers. One morning, on the Atbara river, he sighted as many as 154 giraffes in a herd, as well as buffalo, hartebeest, tiang, roan antelope, waterbuck, koodoo, bushbuck and others, besides various gazelles. His most astonishing experiences were with the wild Hamran Arabs, a clan of sword hunters, who, mounted on small horses and armed with long and very sharp swords, attacked and killed such heavy and dangerous game as elephants and rhinoceroses. No finer sportsmen in the hunting-grounds of the world were ever to be found than these courageous and resourceful fellows, who rode like the wind on their fleet ponies and allowed one of their number to be chased by infuriated elephants, while the other hunters who rode behind got up with the gigantic quarry, leaped from their steeds and often succeeded in hamstringing with their two-handed swords the mighty beasts in front of them. Speaking of the Arab who acted as decoy, Baker writes:

"The greatest coolness and dexterity are required by the hunter, who, now the *hunted*, must so adapt the speed of his horse to the pace of the elephant that the enraged beast gains in the race until it almost reaches the tail of the horse. In this manner the race continues. In the meantime two hunters gallop up behind the elephant, unseen by the animal, whose attention is completely directed to the horse almost within his grasp. With extreme agility, when close to the heels of the

elephant, one of the hunters, while at full speed, springs to the ground with his drawn sword as his companion seizes the bridle, and with one dexterous two-handed blow he severs the back sinew."

The elephant becomes disabled, dislocates the joint by the mere weight of its body, and is helpless. Induced to try another charge, an easy opportunity is afforded to the rear hunter to slash the sinew of the remaining hind-leg. "The animal dies of loss of blood in a short time, thus positively killed by one man with two strokes of the sword." With these sharp swords the Hamran Arabs slew also lions, antelopes, and other game of the country.

"This extraordinary hunting," continues Sir Samuel Baker, "is attended with superlative danger, and the hunters frequently fall victims to their intrepidity. I felt inclined to take off my cap and make a low bow to the gallant and swarthy fellows who sat before me, when I knew the toughness of their hearts and the activity of their limbs. One of them was disabled for life by a cut from his own sword that had severed the knee-cap and bitten deep into the joint, leaving a scar that appeared as though the leg had been nearly off. He had missed his blow at the elephant, owing to the high and tough dried grass that had partially stopped the sword, and in springing on one side, to avoid the animal that had turned upon him, he fell over his own sharp blade, which cut through to the bone and he lay helpless. He was saved by one of his comrades, who immediately rushed in from behind and with a desperate cut severed the back sinew of the elephant. As I listened to these fine fellows, who in a modest and unassuming

manner recounted their adventures as matters of course, I felt exceedingly small. My whole life had been passed in wild sports from early manhood, and I had imagined that I understood as much as most people on the subject; but here were men who, without the aid of the best rifles and deadly projectiles, went straight at their game and faced the lion in his den with shield and sabre."

Baker had many glorious hunts with these splendid fellows, and saw them kill elephant, rhinoceros and other game in the manner described above. His descriptions of their successful chases are wonderfully exciting and well told. Surely there never lived finer or braver hunters upon this earth than these Hamran Arab sword hunters! One never hears the name now. Was their clan destroyed during the long fighting in the Nile and Sudan regions during the eighties and nineties of last century?

There is still a good deal of game in these fine regions of the Abyssinian tributaries of the Nile. Not very long ago, when the railway from Port Sudan and Kassala was linked up with Gedaref and Makwar, Mr J. Walker, Chief Engineer of the Sudan Railways, had a curious experience with an elephant the day before the opening, when he was travelling in his motor-car, near Gedaref, with a friend and a native boy, along a rough piece of so-called road. They heard a strange noise behind them, and looking round were astonished to see a big elephant in full charge, evidently bent on mischief. The beast was within thirty yards, and things looked unpleasant. The native boy, a Sakali, who was sitting behind, suddenly whipped out a whistle and

blew a shrill blast. At the sound the elephant halted, turned short round and plunged into the bush. The Sakali boy, when questioned, declared that the sound of a whistle will always distract an elephant. And it is reported that next day the ladies attending the opening of the new piece of railway, on hearing of the occurrence, all provided themselves with safety whistles!

Many parts of Africa still abound in game, yet it is to be remembered that over great tracts of country such as South Africa the wild creatures have been largely destroyed. In Cape Colony, save for springbok, now mostly to be found on farms fenced in by wire, and the remnants of the great herds that formerly wandered over Bushmanland in the north-west, there is little game left. Bushbuck, klipspringer, steenbok, duyker and vaal rhebok are to be found in sparse numbers here and there. Leopards still linger in the hills, in spite of the "poisoning clubs" of the farmers; and the rare mountain zebra, carefully protected, is found on one or two mountain ranges. In the Orange Free State much the same state of things is found; blesbok and black wildebeest are scarce, and found only on wired-in and protected farms, where their owners allow them to be shot at fixed prices! But in the great game reserve known as the Kruger National Park much has been done in the way of preserving many species of big game, which without protection would have become extinct.

Lieutenant-Colonel Stevenson Hamilton, who for twenty-six years had charge of this great game park, and to whose exertions its wonderful success has been mainly due, well describes this tract of country and its

denizens in his recently published book, *The Low-Veld*. Here, between the Limpopo river and Komati Poort, are to be found elephants, black rhinoceroses, hippos, buffaloes, elands, giraffes, lions, leopards, cheetahs, sable and roan antelopes, koodoo, Burchell zebras, waterbuck, impala, blue wildebeest, tsesseby, reedbuck, bushbuck, and other of the smaller antelopes, as well as bush-pig, warthog and other beasts. Colonel Hamilton estimated that in 1926 there were some 500 lions indigenous to the National Park, besides other carnivora. "Man-eaters," he writes, "are entirely unknown, and since 1902 (with the exception of one instance) there had not within the National Park, nor, indeed, within the whole Low-Veld, occurred a single authenticated case of a lion having attacked a human being unprovoked." This is ascribed to the fact that the lions of this region can find their natural food so easily. Their numbers are kept down by the ranger's staff. "The calculation of the number of lions existing indicated that the annual toll taken by the staff just about equalled the net annual breeding increase." Colonel Hamilton, in his very interesting statistics concerning the National Park, remarks: "The gross increase of the larger antelopes under natural conditions may be estimated at about 30 per cent. annually and, as things were in 1925, the net increase at about 15 per cent. In a purely natural environment, where there is no destruction by man, but where, on the other hand, the beasts of prey are not kept in check at all, the net increase would be about 5 per cent. per annum." These figures are extremely interesting as well as encouraging.

In certain parts of the Kruger National Park, which

includes 8000 square miles of country, large herds of animals such as zebra, wildebeest, tsesseby, reedbuck and others are to be found. "Lions, of course, find the spot an ideal hunting-ground; every night their great voices swell in chorus among the hills, and sometimes in the early mornings they may even be seen as they wend their way to their daily resting-places among the rocks of the Lebombo, or the reeds and palms of the Manzemntondo." Travellers by rail from the Cape and Natal are now taken through this wonderful big-game park.

Sanctuaries such as the Kruger National Park in the North-East Transvaal are to be found in other parts of Africa, all of them doing much good. Yet the melancholy fact remains that in the continent as a whole, in spite of game laws and licences, the wild fauna of the country are slowly but steadily vanishing. Quite recently there happened an instance of the utterly reckless way in which the game are destroyed. The Trek Boers from the Transvaal, who have been in Angola (Portuguese West Africa) since the year 1877, having fallen upon evil days, and having shot out much of the game of the country they were in, have been assisted by the Union of South Africa Government in a fresh trek, or removal, to the mandated territory conquered from the Germans in South-West Africa. There, in the Kaokoland veldt, a region extraordinarily rich in all kinds of big game, they have resumed their old courses, and have in a short time destroyed a very large quantity of the fauna. Why such a thing has been permitted it is hard to say. One hears also of a good deal of indiscriminate slaughter in the Belgian Congo. On the other

hand, in nearly all British colonies and protectorates, the game laws are steadily enforced; but the country is so vast that it is impossible to patrol and protect properly all the territory, and a good deal of poaching goes on, especially by natives.

How the game vanishes, even in a country so well protected as Kenya, is patent to all who have known that country for the last forty or fifty years. When Joseph Thomson first penetrated into East Africa and wrote his book, *Through Masailand*, the quantity of great game-animals rivalled almost the scenes to be witnessed in South Africa in the first half of last century. Even at the present day the marvellous plenty of animal life to be witnessed as the traveller proceeds by rail from the coast to Nairobi and beyond yields a prospect of incredible beauty, large numbers of the most interesting game of Africa being visible for the greater part of the journey. Yet the numbers of animals to be found in Kenya now are not to be compared with those of the days when the late Sir John Willoughby, with his shooting friends, Sir Robert Harvey and Mr C. V. Hunter, made their celebrated shooting expedition thither in the middle eighties. Much of the country is being settled up by Europeans and, as has been the case in South Africa, the lions and the game have to go. It is a melancholy fact, but one cannot alter it, nor would it be advisable to attempt to do so.

Shooting in Kenya and Uganda has for many years been carefully regulated. A visitor's licence there, covering Schedule 3, is available for one year, and costs £100. With certain restrictions of locality, etc., this gives the right to shoot on Crown land a handsome number and

variety of great game: six buffalo bulls, six oryx beisa, eight topi, six Grevy's zebra, twenty Coke's hartebeest, six Hunter's antelope, twelve wildebeest, ten reedbuck, ten each of Peter's and Sœmmering's gazelles. Many other species are included, while lions are free and may be shot at will. One elephant costs £15 extra, two, £45; one giraffe, £15; one rhinoceros, £5; two, £15; one cock ostrich, £5. It may be seen, therefore, that shooting in East Africa is now very well looked after and is by no means a poor man's pastime. In fact, East African big-game shooting is regarded by the initiated as purely one of the luxuries of the rich man.

It is sad to find that here, as elsewhere, luxury and waste are taking the place of the methods of the more careful of the early big-game hunters, such, for example, as Selous. A well-known sportsman (Mr G. H. Anderson), in a letter to *The Times*, wrote as follows of sport in the magnificent game region in the north-west of Tanganyika territory:

"Nearly all shooting parties enter this country from Kenya with motor-lorries and probably a light touring car. And shooting parties go down there generally for about five to six weeks' shoot, and come back with an average of five lions a gun (they are now limited to five), also buffalo, rhino, cheetah, and probably a leopard or two, and about eighteen other different species of game. They get a bag in a six weeks' shoot which in the old days with porters would take seven months or more shooting and working for it. . . .

"I am sorry to say that a great deal of the game has been shot actually from cars. All this really makes a farce of the whole thing and to my mind very little sport.

There is practically no hunting required, and it only means that the so-called 'Big-Game Hunter' comes back at the end of six weeks with a fine bag obtained with practically no work, absolutely no hardships and very little danger."

Mr Anderson, who wrote from an experience of twenty years' shooting in Africa, prophesies that unless this sort of thing is stopped the game in this magnificent country will in a few years' time "not be shot out, but murdered out." We heartily agree. These doings are surely enough to make the old hardy heroes of the past turn in their graves!

There are, happily, considerable portions of Central Africa still so remote, so little known and so sparsely populated that the game which shelters there may probably not be destroyed for another century, possibly even for longer. One has heard remotely of such paradises, and the two or three white men who have reached them have enjoyed some of the most stirring and romantic passages of their lives. It is better to preserve silence on such precious natural sanctuaries, or we might have an American invasion thither, followed a few months later by a huge book with maps of the locality.

India has been famous for its big game for about the same period as Africa. Williamson's great work on *Oriental Field Sports*, with fine coloured plates after Samuel Howitt, first served about a hundred years ago to draw attention to the sporting delights of that wonderful country. The conditions of life there differ, of course, completely from those of Africa, and especially of South Africa. The country has a very large and very ancient native population, closely occupied with various forms

of agriculture. There has been no great migration thither of European settlers. Huge tracts of country remain under the government of great native princes, who are, for the most part, very careful to preserve the game in their provinces and by no means encourage general shooting, except by their own invited guests. Speaking generally, it may be stated that India has by no means been shot out to the extent now prevailing in large areas of Africa.

Many books have in recent years appeared dealing with the condition of game and sport in Hindustan. The most recent of them, published during the last few months, are *Musings of an Old Shikari*, by Colonel A. I. R. Glasfurd; *Twenty-five Years' Big-Game Hunting*, by Brigadier-General R. Pigot; and *Big-Game Shooting in the Indian Empire*, by Lieutenant-Colonel C. H. Stockley. All three are admirable books, giving very ample information as to the past and present state of big-game shooting in our Indian Empire, and yielding stirring pictures of sport in the varied regions where shikaris can still obtain excellent shooting in that great country.

Colonel Glasfurd is well remembered by his first book, *Rifle and Romance in the Indian Jungle*, published twenty-five years ago, when he was a captain. His new volume is not one whit behind that delightful book in charm and interest.

Colonel Stockley addresses himself mainly to the foot hunter and the man of limited means. He remarks that "although the game has diminished greatly in a few districts in the last fifty years, yet there are still large tracts of country from which only an occasional sportsman takes toll."

The cost of shooting in India is certainly far less than that of big-game hunting in Africa at the present day. Under the "block" system, in the Central Provinces, Central India and the United Provinces, good tracts of forest shooting are to be obtained from Deputy Commissioners or Forest Officers, if application is made well beforehand, at very reasonable cost—a few pounds from each of the gunners applying for the permit. Other expenses and licences, of course, add to the cost. In Kashmir, under the "Nullah" system, sport is still very good, though rather more expensive. A near relative of my own, shooting in Kashmir in 1927, secured three fine heads of the Kashmir stag (Barasingha) in a week's stalking, and felt himself abundantly rewarded for a long and trying "hot weather" in the plains. The forest "blocks" are very carefully looked after and the game is well conserved. On the other hand, native shikaris are allowed far too free a hand.

"Throughout India," says Colonel Stockley, "without exception the chief enemy of the game, the native shikari to wit, is not sufficiently controlled. The native shoots for pecuniary profit; for he sells hide and meat, and in certain pernicious cases the head as well.

"In the last twenty years a regular market has sprung up for the sale of trophies. Heads from Kashmir, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces find their way through Rawalpindi and Sialkot, Cawnpore, Allahabad and Harda to the big shops at Bombay; and in a few cases to Calcutta. They are sold at the most amazingly high rates to globe-trotters, who sometimes save a lot of money by purchasing their 'trophies' at a middleman's up-country shop."

The enterprising native poacher does exceedingly well. He can get twenty rupees for a bison-hide, the same for its head, and thirty rupees for the meat. But on the whole the prospects of Indian big game may be pronounced as rather more promising than those of the game of Africa. Tigers are still plentiful in India, and likely to remain so for many years to come. I can heartily commend these three books on Indian sport and wild life to the attention of my readers.

Brigadier-General Pigot's book, it may be noted, also deals with sport in countries so widely sundered as Norway, Sardinia, Suakim, Mongolia, Siam, Eastern Siberia, Newfoundland, Chinese Turkestan, the Pamirs and New Zealand, and yields descriptions of a very varied series of sporting expeditions.

Mr Algernon Noble, in his pleasant book, *Siberian Days*, has something to say—but not a great deal—on the game of that country. He is by profession a mining engineer, and in the course of his wanderings in search of mineral wealth he traversed many portions of the vast and difficult country of which he writes. Wolves he describes as very abundant and a great curse almost everywhere. In Amurland, besides bear and wolf, are to be found deer and lynx, as well as those valuable creatures—which are not to be classed as big game—marten and sable. Wolves, from their plenty in all these countries, must destroy a vast number of deer. The deer were occasionally so tamed by hunger that they fed at night from the settlers' hayricks. On one occasion four were shot during the morning's pursuit after one of these raids. Wapiti were also occasionally met with, and one, hard pressed by three wolves and very lame,

was secured by the author. This book does not pretend to be one on sport, but it gives some graphic pictures of life in Siberia—not, apparently, a very comfortable country, whether for sport or travel. It seems possible that one day Amurland may be a great gold-producing region.

North America as a big-game country is, as most people are aware, not what it was. The myriads of bison—or "buffalo," as they were called—have long since been exterminated on the plains, and even the Rocky Mountains do not now produce the wonderfully fine sport of other and better days. Mr Frantz Rosenberg, a Norwegian sportsman, whose book, *Big-Game Shooting in British Columbia and Norway*, has recently appeared, went far afield for his shooting in America, and travelled to the north-western region of British Columbia for the good sport which he obtained. His trophies included bear, caribou, wild sheep (Bighorn), Rocky Mountain goat and moose. Game is evidently still fairly plentiful in this country, as in Alaska; but much depends on the amount of careful and systematic protection which the United States and the Canadian governments can maintain in these distant countries.

In the latter half of Mr Rosenberg's book is a good description of reindeer- and elk-hunting in Norway. Reindeer are fairly plentiful; but there is a great deal of poaching, and hardy countrymen, armed with Krag rifles, account for many head of game. Wolves again, even in Norway, are mentioned as destroying elk and reindeer. Elk are not flourishing apparently, and the Norwegian Government have occasionally decreed various seasons of protection, both for elk and reindeer,

which for a time have improved matters. But on the whole the prospects of big game in Norway are not too cheerful. Winter poaching in the snow on skis seems to account for a good deal of the decrease among reindeer—one man is known to have killed 150 of these deer in a single winter. The poachers are truculent fellows; keepers are fired upon, and attempts on them with dynamite have been not unknown. In fact, all is not well with the sport in Norway.

Messrs Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game* appeared last year (1929) in its ninth edition. To the big-game sportsman and naturalist this is an absolutely invaluable book. It is, in fact, unique. Here are to be found descriptions of every variety of great game, their various habitats and innumerable measurements of the finest trophies obtained amongst them. The compilation of this great record must have been a work of immense labour, and the authors may well be congratulated upon the result.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Morning on an African River

DAWN was just breaking in the wild region of Ngamiland, where, not far from the spreading Botletli river, our wagons stood outspanned in a thin grove of trees, for the most part giraffe acacias. As the light came and the pallid north-eastern sky took on the faintest flush of pale rose, and long streamers of apple-green spread towards the zenith, the birds began to awaken to another African day. Queer-looking hornbills, which had been resting for the night midway up the trees, were preening their wings with their gigantic beaks, stretching their necks, uttering strange, weird cries to one another—variations mostly of *Toc-toc-toc-tocke-tocke-tocke-toc*—and presently flew hither and thither, some to the ground, some to other trees in search of food. Gorgeous rollers, birds miscalled blue jays by South African colonists, creatures of the most lovely plumage and striking hues—lilac, blues of various tones, purple, violet, pale and dark greens, purplish pink and pale reddish brown, all blended by nature in the most cunning fashion—were, too, beginning to flit hither and thither. Overhead, bands of sand-grouse, birds of the desert wastes, were scurrying with short, sharp cries to the river and the lagoons for their morning drink. Presently, from near the wagons, came harsher and louder sounds—the *honk! honk! honk!* of wild

geese. At these sounds there was a stir in the interior of both wagons, the foreclaps (front canvas) were unfastened and two heads, one habited in a scarlet and the other in a blue nightcap, were thrust out. My hunting friend and I caught sight of one another at the same moment, exchanged a friendly nod and "Good morning, old chap," and called for coffee. This was already being prepared at the camp-fire hard by, and a plump little Makalaka, a lad of about ten, brought a small *kommetje*[1] of the refreshing liquid to each of us. We were quickly into our clothes, and, leaving our ablutions to a later period, took down our shot-guns and sallied forth after the game. We were not disappointed. Two or three splendid Egyptian geese were circling about the grove, while another pair were sitting up in a big motjeerie-tree, sixty or seventy yards away. These geese were attracted thither from the river by a large lagoon, which lay about two hundred yards from our camp, and was just then being filled by the main stream, spreading in a wonderful filigree over the adjacent champaign. It is a marvellous sight, this overflow, occurring as it does in a desert and parched country, in the very middle of the dry season, and in all Africa there is scarce another phenomenon like it.

In England it would seem a strange thing to see wild geese sitting in trees; in the South African veldt, where so many curious incidents happen, it appeared not so very extraordinary an occurrence. We spread out and approached the tall, oak-like motjeerie from different angles. My comrade, on the right hand, was presently saluted with a harsh *honk! honk! honk!* which came overhead from trees between him and the lagoon. One

of the geese had incautiously wheeled round again—they are fairly unsophisticated in these regions, where the shot-gun is seldom heard—and paid the penalty of his folly. A charge of No. 2 shot struck him in the head and neck, and he fell to the dry earth with a resounding thud. At the report of the twelve-bore two other geese, still perching in the tall tree, rattled forth, one on either side. The one nearest the wagon was within reach of my gun, and he, too, fell a victim. We now gathered up our spoil, deposited the birds under the tree and passed on to the lagoon.

The Egyptian goose is a bird of handsome form and magnificent plumage, notable for its ruddy colouring interspersed with grey and black; on the wings, which are finely marked with brick-red, white and grey, is a clear white patch, met about half way along by brilliant green, and then by a thin black line. On the lower part of the breast is a patch of deep rufous. The head is whitish, while the circles round the eyes, a patch at the back of the neck and a ring encircling the lower part of the neck are also rufous. Handsome as he is, however, this splendid goose is not a very good eating bird, being in this respect far eclipsed by his cousin, the great spur-winged goose, and by the various wild duck, widgeon, and teal found so abundantly wherever water occurs in South Africa.

At the lagoon, under the influence of the growing sunlight, life was awakening fast. Duck and widgeon were scuttering about the water; elegant black-and-white kingfishers, already astir, were hovering on the watch for their fishy prey, and falling with the splash of a good-sized stone as they struck the water; along the

banks were lurking among the thickets a small covey of red-billed francolins—"silver pheasants," as some of the colonists are pleased to call them. Strolling round the lagoon, admiring the scene thus presented to us on this clear, bright African winter morning, we picked up a couple or two of water-fowl, fine yellow-billed duck, handsome red-billed teal, and a much smaller and somewhat scarcer bird, a Hottentot teal, as well as a couple of francolins, before returning to camp for breakfast. These red-billed francolins are desperate runners, loving to lurk in the shelter of bush and undergrowth, and can scarcely be put up. If hustled a little with a dog they can, however, be treed, and thence, being driven off by the appearance of the sportsman, are secured in mid-flight. Not seldom, however, they prefer to stick to the shelter of the tree, trusting, by squatting close, that the protective colouring of their grey-brown plumage, which almost exactly matches the trunk and branches, may enable them to escape the gunner's eye. They can scarcely be called good sporting birds, but their flesh is very palatable, and with duck and teal they afford an excellent variant from the monotony of a diet chiefly consisting of the flesh of giraffe and large antelopes.

We now strolled back to camp and, having performed our ablutions in a bucket of water apiece, fell to breakfast. Seated on our low wagon-chairs — squat pieces of furniture, laced with raw-hide thongs, such as the Boers use on their long treks—and with a little folding-table in front of us, we discussed with keen appetites springbuck-fry and bacon, most delicious of veldt fare, good bread, made from coarse Boer meal and baked in a three-legged iron pot, and excellent coffee. Some

marmalade, extracted from a tin of ubiquitous "Morton," brought the repast to a fitting and typically English conclusion. Then followed the fragrant pipe of good Transvaal tobacco, and we prepared for the more serious work of the day.

Buckling on our spurs, and reaching down our rifles from the hooks fastened on the inner sides of the wagons, we mounted our ponies and, accompanied by three or four natives, rode down towards the main river, a mile or so away. The lagoon near our camp was being steadily filled by a channel from the big stream, and passing out of the grove in which we were outspanned we followed this channel in its course along a hard, sun-baked, alluvial flat, which in another week or two would itself be covered with water. The sun was hot now, although it was not yet nine o'clock. As we quitted the thin shade of the acacias our eyes were met by a typical South-Central African landscape. On this side of the broad and shining river lay the bare spreading flats, here and there pitted and seamed with lagoons of clear water and temporary streamlets. These lagoons were black with water-fowl—geese, duck, widgeon, teal, pelicans, ibises, flamingoes, storks, and many rare wading-birds. Here and there, amid the inundation created by the steadily rising river, stood pleasant islets, for the most part clothed with grass and bush, and crowned with tall palm-trees. Far away beyond the river and its reed-beds stretched into the hot, dim, mysterious distance the mighty plain of which all this region consists. As we approached the main river the quick eye of the Bakurutse spoorers, who inhabit this part of the country, and know its wild life by heart, had noticed a little knot of

antelopes feeding not far from the margin of the stream. These animals were lechwe, a rare kind of waterbuck of which we were in search, found only upon the river and lake systems of the far interior, and we now laid our plans for circumventing them. Spreading out a little, we approached the antelopes. When within four hundred yards they began to get uneasy, and finally, headed by a fine ram, carrying a good pair of horns, they attempted to run the gauntlet and escape right-handed along the river-bank. To the left they were hemmed in by a deep channel of water, issuing from the main stream, that which supplied the lagoon of which I have spoken. Lechwe, excellent swimmers though they are, are not fond of the main river and deep streams; they know too well that these swarm with crocodiles, fierce, ravenous brutes, always on the look-out for a banquet of fresh meat. But their manœuvre was just a little belated. If they had started half-a-minute earlier they might have retreated scathless; now they had allowed us to approach too near. It was a close thing. The lechwe sped gallantly across the hard, smooth flat of baked mud; occasionally one or the other bounding high up into the air, as if clearing some unseen obstacle. My comrade and I, putting in spurs, now pressed our nags to the top of their speed and galloped hard along the flat, intent on cutting off the antelopes and getting in our shots. We were just in time. Within a hundred yards of us the lechwe halted, bewildered, manifestly doubting whether they could make good their escape. Flinging ourselves from our ponies, we obtained a good if hurried shot apiece, and each hit a buck. One went down, but was almost instantly on its feet again, tearing away

right-handed with two hornless ewes. The other five, comprising the troop, turned sharp round and, skirting the angle of the river in the other direction, made good their retreat—all, that is to say, except the other wounded ram, which lagged perceptibly. Him my hunting friend followed, and presently, as the antelope stood again, brought to a halt by sheer distress, he got a steady shot within a hundred yards, and brought down his buck for the second time. The lechwe struggled, but unavailingly. Never again would he reach the welcome sanctuary of that dense, almost impenetrable mass of reed-bed into which his comrades were disappearing. As my comrade rode up the buck collapsed, and with a sudden, gentle shiver yielded up his life.

The lechwe (*Cobus Lechwe*) is an extremely handsome antelope, quite one of the most striking of the lesser waterbucks. Standing a little less than the true waterbuck in height, a good ram is about half as big and heavy again as an English fallow-buck. The general colour is bright yellowish brown, lighter on the sides and white underneath; the coat, as befits an animal so extremely fond of the water, is thick, and the hair somewhat long. The head is rounded, very handsome, and surmounted by a pair of fine horns, strongly ringed, or annulated, measuring in good average specimens two feet or a trifle over. In shape these horns strongly resemble those of the magnificent waterbuck, inclining outward, backward, and then forward and inward towards the points. White markings are found on the inside of the legs, round the eyes and base of the ears, and from the chin and throat to the breast. The eyes are large, dark and very beautiful. Down the front of

the limbs run dark brown markings, towards the hoofs. The hoofs themselves are very curious, differing in fact from those of all other African antelopes save the marsh- or lagoon-haunting Situtunga, or Speke's Antelope. The lechwe is, in fact, next to the Situtunga, quite the most water-loving of all the antelopes. Occasionally it will feed away from the river—never, however, out of sight of the reed-beds—but its normal habit is to stand knee-deep or belly-deep among the shallow lagoons and waters, cropping at the vegetation it finds in these cool abiding-places. A glance at his curious feet explains how exactly nature has developed them for so watery a habitat. The hoofs themselves are long and pointed, and are manifestly exactly fitted for getting about upon muddy and marshy bottoms; between the true hoofs and the false or lateral hoofs, the surface, instead of being, as in other antelopes, clothed with hair, is absolutely naked, and the black shining skin shows very remarkably. The female, as I have said, is hornless, as in the case of all the water-frequenting antelopes, and in size is a little inferior to her lord and master. Altogether the handsome lechwe, with its bright yellowish coat, its sturdy form, fine horns and gallant carriage, is quite one of the most remarkable among the many notable species of African antelopes. In some localities, where it has not been much disturbed, it is to be seen amongst the vast spreading marshes and lagoons in herds of some hundreds, forming a spectacle that few hunters can recall without feelings of infinite pleasure.

My comrade, having carefully skinned and cut off the head and neck of his prize, now left the rest of the

gralloching operation to one of the native hunters and, mounting his horse, cantered away in the direction of myself, who meanwhile had been having some trouble with my head of game. When my wounded buck took away right-handed I quickly followed it. A minute or two elapsed, however, before I had reloaded and mounted again, and meantime the antelope, wounded though it was—hit right through the body—had gained a fair start. For half-a-mile the chase went briskly on, and then, suddenly, arrived at a broad streamlet connecting the main river with a chain of lagoons, the stricken beast lay down. As I approached it rose again, and, looking out over the stream, made up its mind to cross. It must have been hard pressed to do so. Slipping down quietly into the water the antelope swam rapidly across, and by the time I had galloped up was just emerging, its coat dripping with water, on the farther bank. The shot was not a difficult one; the buck was barely sixty yards distant, but I was flurried and shaky from my gallop, and, try though I might to steady my weapon, I clean missed. Shoving another cartridge into the breach I fired again, and again missed. An angry exclamation escaped from my lips as I saw the antelope scramble up the summit of the little islet and disappear into some bush and scrub. Should I take off my clothes and swim after it? No, it was too great a risk. Only lately had we seen a wounded lechwe, which had taken refuge in the main stream, and was standing up to its middle in water, snatched from under the very spears of the native hunters, as they advanced to finish it off, by a crocodile. It was not good enough, and cantering along the bank of the rising tributary I

presently found a fairly shallow ford and effected a crossing. As I crossed, the water even here rose to my nag's shoulders. I noted shoals of lively mullet coming in with the rising water, playing and leaping briskly apparently out of the sheer pleasure of life. These fish are well called " springer " by the Dutch Colonists. In another twenty minutes I had approached the ground where I had last seen the wounded buck. Cautiously approaching the spot, I presently found the blood-spoor of which I was in search. Following this carefully for a couple of hundred yards, I came nearly to the edge of the bush, which here covered the islet. I had left my horse and was now advancing quietly with a Bakurutse spoorer. As we passed under a tall palm-tree something moved in the bush thirty yards in front. It was not, as I had expected, the wounded lechwe, but a duyker, which, disturbed from its lurking-place, flashed into another patch of bush and was lost to view. We now emerged from the covert, and saw from the spoor in front of us that the lechwe had gone on and gained its sanctuary in a small reed-bed some few hundred paces distant. I now went back for my horse and waited for some natives following in the rear. These coming up, we fired shots into the reed-bed, and the wounded buck, presently driven forth, emerged with a small troop of six other lechwe. The unwounded antelopes, hastening for their lives and escaping on that side most distant from the gunners, galloped safely away. The wounded animal was now going very slowly and, presently standing again, was secured with another bullet. Meanwhile the escaped lechwes reached a chain of shallow lagoons, through which they plunged in a series

ON AN AFRICAN RIVER

NO HUNTER WHETHER HE BE WHITE OR BLACK CAN AFFORD TO TAKE LIBERTIES WITH THAT MOST DANGEROUS DENIZEN OF THE AFRICAN RIVER OR LAKE THE CROCODILE THESE MONSTERS STILL TAKE A HEAVY TOLL OF HUMAN LIFE CHIEFLY AMONG NATIVES

of astounding leaps. With each bound the gallant beasts drove showers of sparkling spray around them, affording to the onlookers one of the prettiest sights in the world. Finally having made good their point in a vast mass of tall reeds, from which it would be impossible to dislodge them, we turned our attention in other directions.

During another hour or more of manœuvring along the river course, and its adjacent marshes and lagoons, no fresh shot was attainable. The lechwe had become thoroughly alarmed, and those seen betook themselves to their sanctuaries long before we could get within fair range.

Having dismissed our attendants, and sent on the meat and trophies to camp, we turned our horses' heads and rode away from the river in the direction of the big grass plain, which, beginning at a little distance from the alluvial flats, stretched away for many miles southward. As we approached the edge of this mighty flat we dismounted, and left our horses behind us knee-haltered. Then, creeping up very cautiously to the plateau, we surmounted with infinite care the soft, crumbling bank of reddish soil, and, peering through the tall grass, looked forth for game. We were not disappointed. These grass flats were the haunt of many hundreds of springbuck, and, as we had expected, we saw, checkering the pale yellow, sun-bleached grass, little knots of these graceful antelopes, feeding quietly in different directions. They were, however, mostly too far out on the plain to afford anything like a fair or reliable shot. At six hundred yards a springbuck, with its slender form and long legs, is a very small target,

and the chances are many against a hit. As we looked right-handed, however, we espied, within eighty or ninety yards of the edge of the flat, two springbucks alone. Here was a fair chance, indeed! Cautiously retreating, we crawled for a quarter of a mile under the bank, and then, with anxious hearts, and amid a wonderful stillness, as it seemed to us, approached the plain again. It was now high African noon; the sun was blazing overhead and the heat was terrific. The sweat ran plentifully from us, though we were in light enough attire. We crawled slowly up the yielding bank and then, taking off our wide-brimmed hats, once more peered through the screen of grass. We had taken our bearings exactly, and were now within ninety yards of our game, which, thanks to our skilful approach, were still feeding without a suspicion of their peril. It was no use firing together; both shots are, as every gunner knows too well by experience, more often than not spoiled in that way. I nodded silently to my comrade, who now poked his rifle through the grass, raised the point, and took deliberate aim at the nearest buck, a good ram with a nice pair of horns. It was a pretty shot. As the report cracked out upon the quiet veldt the springbuck gave one wild leap into the air and fell dead. The bullet had gone clean through its heart. Upon the instant the remaining antelope darted away, impelled as if from some gigantic catapult, and flashed across the plain. I took rapid aim and pulled trigger; but the buck was going too fast—probably thirty miles an hour—and the bullet, missing its mark, whistled away into empty space, hitting up the sand at something under a mile's distance. Picking up the dead buck, we now went

back to our horses, bestowed the dead ram neatly behind one of the saddles, and, well content with our morning's sport, jogged quietly campwards.

NOTE

[1] These *kommetjes* or small basins are invariably used by up-country Boers for coffee-drinking. Many English follow their example in the veldt.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Scrivelsby & the Champions of England

IN a quiet and remote corner of Lincolnshire, two and a half miles from the old-fashioned country town of Horncastle, lies Scrivelsby, a place which has been the home of the Hereditary Champions of England for more than eight hundred years. Here, at Scrivelsby Court, still resides the present Champion, Mr Frank Scaman Dymoke, who carried the Standard of England at the coronations of King Edward VII. and King George V. Mr Dymoke is a lineal descendant of the Marmions, one of whom, Sir Robert Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye-le-Marmion (which lies between Caen and Falaise), came over with William the Conqueror, and was by him created Hereditary Champion of England and granted large estates at Scrivelsby, Lutterworth, Tamworth, and elsewhere in the counties of Lincoln, Gloucester, Warwick and Hereford.

It is worth remembering that the Marmions had been Hereditary Champions of the Dukes of Normandy for a long period before they came over with the Conqueror. They were kinsmen of the Norman Dukes, claiming descent from a common ancestor, Rollo, or Rolf, "the Ganger." When Scrivelsby was granted to Sir Robert Marmion it was on the tenure of Knight Serjeanty, the same tenure as that by which the Norman estates were held. This service demanded, as in Normandy, that the

holder of the fee should appear as Champion at the King's Coronation and there uphold the title of his master to the throne of England. Precedent is of long habit in England, and the words of the Challenge of York Herald, proclaimed in Westminster Hall at the coronation of Charles II., no doubt followed closely those of earlier days. The Challenge ran as follows:

"If any person, in what degree soever, high or low, shall deny or gainsay our Sovreign Lord, King Charles II., King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, son and next heir to our Sovreign Lord Charles I., the last King deceased, to be the right heir to the imperial crown of this realm of England, or that he ought not to enjoy the same, here is his champion who saith that he lyeth and is a false traytor, being ready in person to combat with him, and in this quarrel will adventure his life against him, on what day soever shall be appointed."

Thereupon the Champion threw down his gauntlet, which, lying some time, and nobody taking it up, it was delivered to him again by York Herald. This ceremony was thrice repeated, and at the foot of the steps, leading up to the King's banqueting-table at the top of the Hall, the Champion reined in his horse and awaited the King's pleasure. The King then rose and, taking a gold cup full of wine from his attendant, drank to his Champion and sent the cup to him. Thereupon, after due reverences, the Champion drank off the wine, and, backing his horse down the Hall, retired, taking the cup with him as his fee. The Champion on these occasions was clad in bright armour, with a plume in his helmet. He was entitled by his tenure to choose the best armour,

save one, and the best steed, save one, from the King's armoury and stables. Two attendants rode before him, one carrying his spear, the other his shield, and he was escorted by the Earl Marshal and other high officials, also mounted. On the last occasion upon which this ancient ceremony took place, at the coronation of George IV., in 1821, the Champion, Mr Henry Dymoke, then a young man of twenty, acting for his father, the Rev. John Dymoke, was escorted by the Duke of Wellington, Lord High Constable, the Marquess of Anglesey, Lord High Steward, and Lord Howard of Effingham, as Deputy Earl Marshal for the Duke of Norfolk, all mounted and with their horses richly caparisoned. A page was at the head of each horse and a groom following. Since George the Fourth's time no coronation banquet has been held in Westminster Hall, and the ancient and magnificent ceremony, which had endured for so many centuries, has been abandoned. The Hereditary Champion, however, still rides in the King's procession, carrying the Royal Standard.

There is no instance of the challenge ever being accepted or of the Champion's gauntlet being taken up. Sir Walter Scott, in *Redgauntlet*, describes, indeed, the appearance from the assemblage in Westminster Hall of a youthful female who picks up the gauntlet and instantly disappears. This is, of course, pure fiction. The ceremony of the coronation is described in close detail by the Champion of the time, Mr John Dymoke, and there is no reference to any such happening. There was a persistent rumour among the Jacobites, however, that Prince Charles Edward was actually present in the crowd, and this rumour seems to have been given some

credit by Scott. The armour worn on these occasions became, with the gold cup, the property of the Champion; but in the case of the horse it seems that the animal was compounded for by a money payment on behalf of the Crown—at the coronation of George III. the value of the animal being fixed at £105.

There are no records existing of the various coronations from William the Conqueror to Richard II. We only know that Sir Robert Marmion was the first Hereditary Champion, and that other Marmions succeeded him in his title until 1292, when the last male heir of that great and proud family, Sir Philip Marmion, died, leaving four daughters, heiresses of his estates. From the youngest of these, Joan, who inherited Scrivelsby, is descended the Dymoke family, her granddaughter, Margaret de Ludlow, having married Sir John Dymoke, from whom all the Dymokes of Scrivelsby trace descent.

Scott's *Marmion* is, of course, a splendid fiction, in which historical fact is blended with pure romance. His titles are thus described:

> "They hailed him Lord of Fontenaye,
> Of Lutterward and Scrivelbaye,
> Of Tamworth tower and town."

But Scott's Champion is described as fighting at Flodden (1513), whereas the last Marmion died, as has been shown, in 1292, more than two hundred years earlier. The effigies of Sir Philip and his lady are still to be seen in Scrivelsby Church, the Knight in chain armour of the period.

Before the coronation of Richard II. there was a

dispute between the descendants of the four daughters of this last Marmion as to the title of Champion of England. The Court of Claims, by which the case was tried, decided in favour of Lady Dymoke, her grandmother, Joan Marmion, having inherited Scrivelsby, to which was attached, by Knight Serjeanty, the office of Hereditary Champion. Her husband, Sir John Dymoke, therefore, as representing his wife, officiated as Hereditary Champion at the coronation of Richard II., in 1377. From that time until the coronation of George IV. a Dymoke always appeared in Westminster Hall as Champion of the successive kings and queens of England. Here, in truth, is a wonderful historical record. Scarce another family, even in England, can show a descent which is clearly traceable, not only to the reign of the Conqueror himself, but to even more distant days, when his ancestors were Dukes of Normandy. The fifteen quarterings of their coat of arms show Dymoke, Ludlow, Marmion, Vulpeck, Hebden, Rye, Welles, Waterton, Engaine, Sparrow, Talboys, Barraden, Fitzwith, Umfraville and Kyme.

The Champion of Edward IV., Sir Thomas Dymoke, married a daughter of Lord Welles, whose son, Sir Robert Welles, took up arms against the King. All three lost their heads, Sir Thomas and Lord Welles, apparently, very unjustly. Sir Thomas's son and heir, Robert, was, on coming of age, restored by King Edward to the family estates and knighted. He appeared as Champion at the coronations of Richard III., Henry VII. and Henry VIII. There is a fine table monument to this Sir Robert Dymoke, who died in 1545, in Scrivelsby church. Sir Robert was a great favourite of Henry VIII.

and was Treasurer to him in Flanders. Sir Robert's son and successor, afterwards Sir Edward Dymoke, Champion at the coronations of Edward VI., Mary and Elizabeth, was Sheriff of Lincolnshire at the dangerous period of the rising known as "The Pilgrimage of Grace," and had some ado, even with the help of his aged father, in keeping his own head on his shoulders.

The Dymokes were, very naturally, strong supporters of the Stuarts, and during the troubled reign of Charles I. and the Commonwealth suffered very heavy losses in that cause. These losses were never made good to them in after years. Succeeding Dymokes appeared as armed Champions of the King or Queen thenceforward till the time of George IV., when the time-honoured ceremony was last performed in Westminster Hall. The Champion at the coronation of George III., Mr John Dymoke, has left a full and very curious account of the ceremony, which may be found in the late Canon Lodge's excellent book, *Scrivelsby, the Home of the Champions*, published in 1894—a complete record of this ancient family. Canon Lodge was for many years Rector of Scrivelsby and Canon of Lincoln.

Scrivelsby, which I had the pleasure of visiting recently, lies in a rich, corn-growing area of Lincolnshire, but is distinguished from the flatness of the surrounding country by pleasant undulations and much timber. The park is a considerable one, and it was cheering to note, in these days of agricultural depression and deerless parks, a good herd of fallow-deer feeding among the timber near the entrance to the Court. Scrivelsby church lies in the park, and at one of the ancient entrances to the estate, by which we drove thither, stands a very

quaint and antique cottage, known as Tea-Pot Hall. This curious old thatched building is evidently a relic of pre-Tudor days, and was then probably a lodge to the estate, though no longer used for that purpose. Scrivelsby, it may be added, lies only a few miles from Somersby, the home of the Tennysons, and Revesby Abbey, the seat of the Stanhopes, is in the same district. The Lincolnshire Wolds lie to the north, between Scrivelsby and Louth, twelve miles away; while to the eastward the sea at Skegness is twenty miles distant.

The church, dedicated to St Benedict, is of various periods, the oldest dating back nearly six hundred years. It has suffered externally a good deal from restorations, but the interior contains many interesting features, and a number of monuments to various Champions, including the stone effigies of Sir Philip, the last of the Marmions, and his lady.

The old stone entrance gateway to Scrivelsby Court, surmounted by a crowned lion—one of the three crests of the family—dates back to 1519. Passing through it one comes to the very quaint old pre-Tudor gatehouse, which formerly guarded the entry across the moat, part of which still exists. The old home of the Dymokes —probably pre-Tudor—was destroyed by fire in 1761, the ancient gatehouse escaping. The present building is Tudor-Gothic in style and is a fair specimen of an English country gentleman's house. In the entrance hall are some suits of armour, banners and ancient weapons. The seven coronation cups, dating from the reign of James II., are carefully preserved. The house is not publicly shown, and in the present days of motor charabancs and other inundations this is scarcely to be

wondered at. It was a great pleasure to my companion and myself to have visited this ancient and most interesting spot—part and parcel, one may say, of English history since the date of the Norman Conquest.

This chapter on Scrivelsby and the Champions of England is not quite in line with the rest of a book on sport and wild life. But it is to be remembered that the Dymokes and their ancestors, the Marmions, have, almost without exception, during a period of close on a thousand years, been great sportsmen and country gentlemen, as well as warriors, and I have thought it worth while to include this brief record of a great and historical family in the present volume.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A Warwickshire Pilgrimage

WILLIAM SOMERVILE, the author of *The Chace*, that most famous of all hunting poems, lies buried in the church of Wootton Wawen, a quiet and very picturesque village between Stratford-on-Avon and Henley-in-Arden, in the very heart of Shakespeare's country. Few hunting folk pay a visit to this peaceful shrine, and I long looked forward to the pleasure of viewing a place where rest the bones of so great a sportsman and so accomplished a writer.

Not long since I travelled the six miles which lie between Stratford and Wootton Wawen. It is a beautiful stretch of country, typically English, and full of a thousand memories and associations connected with foxhunting and Shakespeare. Rich grass pastures, elmy hedgerows, pleasant woods and gently swelling hills all combine to present one of the fairest of pictures. Birds were busy everywhere. From the woodlands the laughing call of the green woodpecker was constantly to be heard. And from many a copse came the liquid notes of the nightingale. Cowslips decked the green meadows; the bluebell and many another wild flower added charm and colour to the scene.

About a mile before reaching Wootton Wawen, Edstone, the birthplace of Somervile, is passed on the right-hand side of the road. Somervile's ancient manor-

house has long since been pulled down to make room for a big, square, stone building of the period of George IV. The only relic of the house in which the great hunting poet lived and died is the Somervile coat of arms carved in stone and let into a wall in the rear of the present structure.

Descending a gentle hill, and passing an old mill, one comes to the village of Wootton Wawen, with its beautiful old church resting on a little eminence, and dominating as fair a scene as any part of Warwickshire can show. Close at hand, in a handsome park, is a fine old Queen Anne house, one of those solid, stately and roomy mansions in which our ancestors so greatly delighted. The Arrow, a stream which presently joins the Avon, flows by, and a pleasant lake adds to the beauty and variety of the landscape. Standing on the old stone bridge which spans the Arrow one cannot fail to be struck by the reposeful beauty of this truly English picture.

Wootton Wawen church is without doubt one of the most interesting village churches in middle England. Part of it dates from Saxon times; much of it is fourteenth-century work, and the whole, mellowed by long centuries, blends perfectly with the rich countryside in which it stands. As one enters the church one of the first things to strike the eye is the tablet to the memory of John Hoitt, formerly huntsman to Somervile. Some verses by the Rev. J. Gaches, a former vicar, are worth reproducing:

> Here Hoitt, all his sports and labours past,
> Joins his loved master, Somervile, at last;

Together went they echoing fields to try,
Together now in silent dust they lie.
Servant and lord, when once we yield our breath,
Huntsman and poet are alike in death.
Life's motley drama calls for powers and men
Of different cast, to fill the changeful scene;
But all the merit that we justly prize,
Not in the part, but in the acting lies;
And as the lyre so may the huntsman's horn
Fame's trumpet rival and his name adorn.

Hoitt, who long survived his master, died in 1802, at the age of eighty years. He was a real link between Stuart and late Georgian times, for his master—Somervile—was actually born in the reign of Charles the Second. Another of Somervile's huntsmen, Jacob Boeter, lies also in Wootton Wawen churchyard. I noticed as I passed up the churchyard that various Hoitts, no doubt kinsfolk of Somervile's huntsman, have been buried there, one as recently as 1893.

Somervile's own resting-place, as well as that of his wife, is in the Lady Chapel, in the far right-hand corner of the church. His wife, one of the Yorkshire Bethells, predeceased him. These graves, which lie side by side, are merely marked by flat stones let into the flooring of the chapel, and are not easily to be discovered by the casual visitor. A recent vicar of Wootton, the Rev. F. T. Bramston, has, however, been at great pains to rescue Somervile's memory from oblivion, and, thanks to his exertions, a handsome tablet in marble and brass, let into the left-hand wall of the chancel, now informs the public of the poet's resting-place. In the Lady Chapel, above Somervile's tomb, is a handsome

monument to a William Somervile—presumably the grandfather of the author of *The Chace*—who died in 1676, the year before the poet was born. This Somervile, a son of Sir William Somervile, Knight, married a daughter of Sir John Shirley, of Sussex, by whom he had eleven sons and five daughters, of whom five sons and three daughters survived him.

The chapel contains various other handsome monuments. One to Hester, Viscountess St John, who died in 1752; another bears the effigy of a bearded warrior of Henry VIII.'s or Edward VI.'s period, one of the Smyth family, which long flourished in this part of Warwickshire. In another part of the church is a knightly figure of much earlier date.

One cannot wander in this beautiful old church and about the neighbourhood of Wootton and Edstone without attempting to call up some vision of the great huntsman. How many a time must he, with his jolly hounds and his hunting friends, have ridden through the village; how many a time has his horn echoed cheerily through the coverts and over the adjacent fields! Past a timbered cottage in Wootton Wawen village, manifestly of extreme antiquity, probably dating back to pre-Tudor times, must Somervile have ridden many a hundred times.

William Somervile came of a very ancient family, which boasted Norman lineage. He was educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford, where in 1694 he became a Fellow. Quitting Oxford in 1704, he seems thenceforth to have resided at Edstone, where he kept a pack of hounds, and devoted himself heart and soul

to that chase of which he was afterwards to write so eloquently. Although he hunted fox as well as hare and otter, a careful perusal of *The Chace* gives one the impression that Somervile loved the pursuit of the hare more than any other form of sport. In this he was by no means singular. Foxhunting had not then attained to anything like its later importance, and the squires of the Queen Anne and early Georgian period undoubtedly attached more importance to the chase of the stag and hare than that of the fox.

Somervile, although a sturdy and most devoted sportsman, was by no means one of the rude, clownish squires depicted by Addison in *The Freeholder*, and by Macaulay in a famous chapter of his *History*. His scholarly tastes inclined him for many years to the practice of authorship, and he had published a volume of poems before *The Chace* itself appeared. This happened in 1735. The poem was an instant success, and innumerable editions have been called for and published down to the present time. As a picture of hunting in its various phases *The Chace* has never been surpassed; but beyond the stirring scenes so ably depicted by the Warwickshire squire the poem will always have value for its precepts on kennel management, its descriptions of hounds and hound life, and other notable features. The language is invariably well chosen, stately without being pompous, and the blank verse is exceedingly well managed.

It is clear from a perusal of this poem that what Somervile did not know about hounds and hunting was not worth the knowing. Every hunting author since his time has been deeply in his debt, and Peter Beckford,

who is looked upon by many as the greatest authority on the chase, has manifestly availed himself very largely of Somervile's extraordinary knowledge of his subject. Beckford's quotations from the poem are very frequent.

Somervile left no family. It is a somewhat melancholy reflection that, owing to his hospitality and carelessness, his estate became encumbered towards the end of his life, and a family arrangement had to be resorted to with his kinsman and successor, Lord Somervile. Still, the poet hunted to the end of his days, and, although too fond of the bottle in his later years, managed to eke out his span of life to the ripe age (for that period) of sixty-five). Intemperance was the curse of the squires of that time, and Somervile's failing was, unhappily, much too fashionable.

In his best days Somervile had, as may be seen from his picture in the National Portrait Gallery, his full share of good looks. He was of fair, fresh complexion, the face long and oval, the nose straight and shapely, the mouth well formed but weak. This portrait, which shows the author of *The Chace* in a full-bottomed peruke of Queen Anne's time, appeared in the national collection only some thirty years since, and is well worthy of inspection. But a pilgrimage to Somervile's tomb on a fine summer day yields a yet pleasanter memory.

All this fair county of Warwickshire has long been classical hunting-ground. Since Somervile's day many famous sportsmen have pursued the fox there, including John Warde—the "Father of English Foxhunting," as he has been often called—Mr Corbet, Lord Middleton, four Lords Willoughby de Broke, and Lord North—who still survives in a hale and hearty old age, and may

be termed the Nestor of British hunting. The late Mr Spencer Lucy, of Charlecote Park (where Shakespeare is said to have stolen deer during the time of a former Squire Lucy), who mastered the Warwickshire from 1856 to 1858 and from 1867 to 1876, is another well-remembered sportsman in this famous country. The modern Warwickshire hunt may be said to date from the time of the famous Mr John Corbet, of Sundorne Castle, Shropshire, who hunted a country forty miles long and twenty in breadth from 1791 to 1811. His headquarters were at Stratford-on-Avon, and he hunted the country in first-rate fashion. That his hounds were in shape and appearance fully as good as the foxhounds of the present day may be seen by a glance at the engraving of the pack in his time.

But, quite apart from these famous hunting names and the memories associated with them, all this part of Warwickshire is rendered classical by the fact that Shakespeare spent his boyhood and early manhood here, and here made himself acquainted with every form of sport then to be found in Merry England, including hunting, hawking, archery and fishing. In so doing he undoubtedly acquired all that vast store of knowledge of these and other country subjects of which he was to make copious use in the wonderful plays and poems written in his prime. There can be no possible doubt that in the forest of Arden, and the other districts round Stratford, Shakespeare made himself personally acquainted with and took huge delight in these various phases of sport. He writes of them constantly with perfect knowledge and a high appreciation.

In *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* occur some of his

most famous and familiar passages. Thus Theseus, in Act IV., says to Hippolyta:

"Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of the hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:
Despatch, I say, and find the forester.
We will, fair Queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction."

Hippolyta replies to him:

"I was with Hercules and Cadmus once
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder."

Then Theseus replies in that wonderful passage, so dear to hunting men:

"My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn."

There can be no possible doubt that the man who wrote those thrilling lines had himself been many a time

deeply stirred by the spirit of the chase and the notes of hound-music. Shakespeare is here manifestly describing the old-fashioned English hunting-hound of mediæval England, of which the old Southern hound blood, still to be seen in a few harrier packs at the present day, is the last remnant. Many a chase, I will warrant, he had seen with such a pack. Shakespeare loved the woodland and its occupants from his soul, as you may gather from a score of passages in *As You Like It*. Thus in Act II., scene 5, of that play Amiens sings:

"Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat.
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather."

Shakespeare manifestly knew all that there was to be known of the Warwickshire countryside—its beauties, its sports and its customs. And Wootton Wawen, with its memories of Somervile, is rendered doubly endeared to the few hunting pilgrims who make their way thither by the knowledge that Shakespeare too was familiar with every inch of this fair stretch of scenery, and had himself followed hounds and horn there.

I took my way back to Stratford after a most pleasant morning spent amid these ancient scenes. It was spring-time, and, as in Shakespeare's day, the Warwickshire pastures were littered with wild flowers:

"When daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady smocks all silver white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight."

This pilgrimage to Somervile's last resting-place is, in April, May or June, one of the most delightful excursions in the world. The pity of it is that so few hunting folk avail themselves of its quiet pleasures.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Wild Venison in Africa

AFRICAN hunters who have penetrated far into the veldt in search of game are naturally compelled to subsist for the most part on the flesh of the animals they shoot. Their cooking methods are not always of the most finished kind, although the frying-pan and the stew-pot—which serves also as a roaster—are usually available. But hunger and hard exercise are excellent appetisers, and where game is reasonably abundant there is usually a very ample choice of meat. In process of time, after sampling the many varieties of flesh to be found in Africa, the sportsman, unless very hard put to it for a dinner, becomes somewhat critical as to the game he eats and is not always content with the flesh of the coarser and less palatable antelopes.

First on the list of African venison I should put the flesh of the springbok, which is, in my judgment, quite the best game meat to be found in that country, being tender, delicate, and possessed of the true game flavour. Chops from the loin of a springbok in good condition are delicious eating, and the fry of this goodly antelope is also one of the greatest delicacies a hunter can partake of. I once had a very good native boy as cook. When we shot a springbok he used to cut double chops right across the loin and fry them with tinned tomatoes, and the results always gave great satisfaction to my hunting friend and myself.

Next to the venison of the springbok I should place in order of merit that of a fresh young cow giraffe, which to my mind yields some of the very finest game meat in Africa; it is tender, juicy and succulent, and may best be compared with veal, having a game-like flavour of its own, if such a combination could be possible. Whether roasted or stewed, the flesh of a cow giraffe in good condition is very excellent. The curiously long tongue, so wonderfully adapted to the tree-browsing habit of the animal, is also a very welcome delicacy. As for the marrow-bones, they afford one of the prime luxuries of the veldt, the marrow being far superior even to that of our own British beef bones, which are reckoned excellent food at home. The best way to prepare the gigantic marrow-bone of a giraffe is to roast it in hot embers and then saw it in two. A wooden spoon, specially prepared by the hunter, cut with a very long handle, is a useful aid to the obtaining of the marrow, which is very luscious and very rich—so much so that I have heard of men in malaria-stricken country bringing on a fresh attack of fever by over-indulgence in this dainty. The marrow-bones of buffaloes, eland, koodoo, and some of the larger antelopes, are also very good eating.

Third on the list of edible African game flesh I should place the eland, which, in good condition—as it is more often than not—affords some of the finest venison possible. It may be compared with tender veal, or very young beef, with a delicate, game-like flavour of its own, and is exceedingly well tasted. Eland bulls grow to enormous proportions and are very plethoric, putting on fat in a most amazing way. The interior fat of these animals

is in great request for cooking and eating purposes, in a country in which so many of the lesser antelopes yield meat which is dry and lacking in fat. From the *omentum* and kidneys of a heavy eland as much as 200 lb. of fat is often taken.

Among the larger antelopes, next to the eland in point of excellence may be placed the roan antelope, which yields excellent flesh. Concerning venison of this great antelope, my old friend, F. C. Selous, says in one of his books: "My own opinion is that neither the meat of the eland nor the gemsbok, nor that of any other South African antelope at any time of the year surpasses in juiciness and gaminess of flavour a sirloin of roan antelope, when in such high condition that it can be roasted in its own fat." The sable antelope, a near congener of the roan, furnishes, on the contrary, rather poor flesh, which is not to be compared with that of its big cousin.

Among the other large antelopes the gemsbok, although a desert-loving species, yields very good venison and is usually in prime condition, except towards the extreme end of the dry season. The mere fact of being a desert-bred antelope is, in truth, no hindrance to an animal affording good flesh. The springbok, the giraffe and the eland are all desert-loving species, yet all, as I have shown, produce most excellent meat.

The koodoo furnishes very good venison; hartebeest and tsesseby not quite so good. The flesh of the blue wildebeest is coarse and unpalatable and fit only for native consumption. That gigantic and extremely handsome bushbuck the Nyala yields good meat, comparable with that of its not very distant cousin, the koodoo. Zebra-

flesh is by no means palatable to Europeans, although by native Africans it is usually as dearly prized as it is by its hereditary foe, the lion. The meat is sweet, and the addition of yellow fat makes it distinctly unpleasing to the average white man. In fact there is far too much reminiscence of the horse or donkey about zebra-flesh to make it readily endurable to Englishmen.

The flesh of the waterbuck is, to most Europeans, equally as unpleasing as that of zebra or wildebeest. It is coarse and unpalatable, and has a strong, unpleasant flavour; moreover, the fat quickly congeals upon the teeth and palate in a very disagreeable manner. The cobs, or lesser waterbucks, yield a meat of not very high quality, though not so unpleasing as that of the big waterbuck. Perhaps among the best of them may be placed the lechwe, whose venison is eatable, though only to be classed as indifferently good. The flesh of the reedbuck is, in like manner, only of very moderate quality. The Rooi-rhebok — or mountain reedbuck — yields venison of superior quality to that of the common reedbuck, though it is by no means to be ranked in the highest class. The beautiful pallah, or impala, affords quite good venison, especially the ewes, in South African springtime, when they put on flesh rapidly and are in most excellent condition. Indeed, among the antelopes of middling size few, save the springbok, are superior in the quality of their venison to this most striking and most graceful creature. Vaal-rhebok meat is dry and not very inviting; this mountain antelope seems peculiarly liable to the attacks of the bot-fly, and the skin and flesh are often spoiled in consequence.

Among the smaller antelopes I should place easily

first, for the quality of its flesh, the klipspringer, a hardy little mountaineer, which feeds chiefly on grass and yields delicious venison. The bushbuck affords also good meat, as do the steinbuck, oribi, grysbuck and duyker. The flesh of all these small antelopes is, however, distinguished by extreme dryness—a quality which may be said to cling in like manner to most of the feathered game of Africa. Basting with fat bacon or plain fat much improves a joint from one of these antelopes; but larding with bits of bacon fat will render the leg of even dry duyker-flesh quite good eating. Not every hunter has the time or the patience for this process, however, nor would he care to submit the joint to the not over-cleanly fingers of his native cook. I have more than once spent the best part of an hour with a friend in larding the leg of a duyker or steinbuck with pieces of bacon fat; and the result, after roasting the joint in a common Kaffir baking-pot, with hot embers above and below, quite surpassed our expectations.

Among heavy game, that experienced African hunter F. C. Selous swore by the heart of an elephant, roasted on a forked stick over the ashes, or stewed with rice. The meat from the thick part of the trunk and from the cavity above the eye he considered as distinctly inferior; while baked elephant foot, once vaunted as an incomparable dish, he declared to be tasteless and insipid. Rhinoceroses, when really fat, which they are not always, are by no means bad eating; the flesh of the now almost extinct white rhinoceros, in particular, being very beef-like, with a characteristic flavour of its own. In fact the *wit-rhinoster* was, when fat, always in great demand

among Dutch hunters in South Africa. The hump is the favourite part of the mighty beast, and cut off whole and roasted in its skin was always reckoned a prime delicacy by the old school of hunters.

Hippopotamus meat, if the animal be young and in condition, is quite excellent eating; the flesh is dark red in colour and a good deal resembles beef. The most treasured part of the flesh is cut from the flank, and the foot, boiled for twenty-four hours, although not appetising to look at, is very good to eat. The fat which this animal produces in large quantities is much prized by the Boers for culinary and other purposes, while the thick hide produces some of the best and heaviest sjamboks (hide-whips) in Africa.

Buffalo meat, especially taken from a fresh young cow in good condition, is first-rate eating, always in high request among African sportsmen, whether British, Dutch or native. The flesh of African wild pigs affords very good eating, that of the wart-hog, especially, being really excellent.

Bültong (or biltong), sun-dried flesh, which keeps better for being slightly salted, has always been a familiar food to farmers, hunters and travellers in South Africa. It is occasionally made from beef, but this is not at all comparable with bültong prepared from the flesh of game. Springbok bültong is indubitably by far the best of all; after that follow in various gradations koodoo, gemsbok, hartebeest, and so forth. To be properly appreciated bültong should be pared off in very thin shavings, with a sharp knife — a carpenter's plane is still better. For campaigning and long journeys on horseback this is an excellent food, taking up as it

does little room and keeping good for long periods even in the hottest weather.

Some few sportsmen have had the curiosity to sample the flesh of lions, leopards and other felines. I once tasted a piece of cooked leopard's flesh, which was white and tender and by no means bad eating. I am told that lion's flesh, similarly, is quite palatable; there is, however, always the reminiscence of "cat" about such fare, and the white man, unless very hard put to it, is seldom likely to do more than once satisfy a pardonable curiosity.

Among serpents the flesh of the python is much appreciated by most African natives. The meat is white and delicate, somewhat resembling the flesh of fowl, but, owing to a slightly musty flavour, it just misses being really palatable to Europeans. I well remember on the Botletli river, Ngamiland, some Bakurutse hunters bringing in to our camp a pair of good-sized pythons which they had killed, each measuring about twelve feet. These serpents were in beautiful condition, having just cast their skins and their new coats appearing in perfect splendour. I tasted the flesh of one of these snakes and found it as I have described above.

A famous French sportsman, the late M. Foa, has stated that young crocodile is eatable if you understand the skinning of the animal without tainting the flesh with musk. "When in Dahomey," he says, "we made some succulent stews with it." This, again, is a purely esoteric luxury, which few white men would care to partake of.

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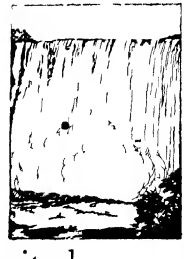

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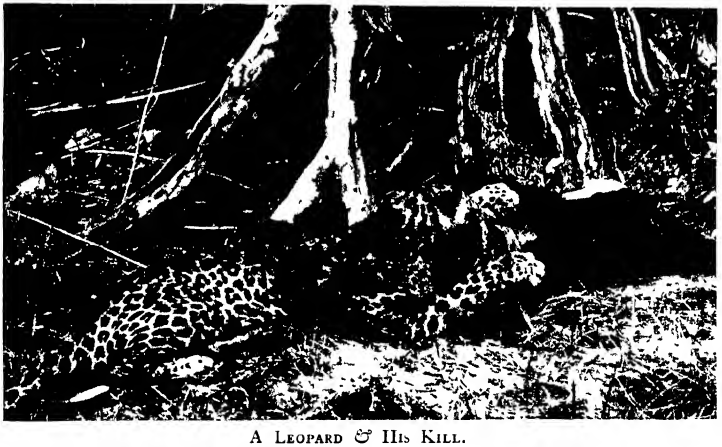

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